

Pragmatic competence in the EFL classroom

*An investigation of the level of pragmatic
competence among Norwegian EFL students at
the VG1 level*

Silje Brubæk



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Abstract

The goal of this thesis has been to investigate Norwegian EFL students at the VG1 level and their level of pragmatic competence in English as well as their understanding of politeness and their ability to demonstrate politeness in English in various contexts. Pragmatic competence and the ability to adapt one's language to contextual demands are emphasized as important skills to develop in the English subject curriculum. I have chosen to write an article-based thesis. It consists of an article as well as an extended abstract that is meant to elaborate on the theoretical foundation of the article as well as the most important findings and implications. In the article I used Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987) in order to analyze data that were collected by means of a discourse-completion test – a test type that consist of descriptions of various oral communication situations. The test takers produce written responses to these situations and explain how they would express themselves in the various situations. In the test developed for this study, I included four situations in which the test takers had to produce requests. These situations varied in terms of interlocutors and the required level of formality. Forty students at the VG1 level participated in this study. In the extensive abstract, I present Brown and Levinson's theory in more detail and look at the most relevant points of criticism directed towards their theory. I also present the results of a second study conducted among three high school teachers. By means of semi-structured interviews, I investigated their attitudes towards pragmatic competence and their impressions of the level of this competence among Norwegian EFL students. I also reflect on a series of potential challenges that need to be considered and solved in order to teach pragmatic competence. The investigation in the article indicated that the students are at one of the beginning stages of L2 pragmatic development. They have acquired a fairly limited repertoire in terms of expressions of politeness. Most students tended to use the same formulation irrespectively of the contextual demands. Moreover, the students seemed to rely on their L1 when trying to express politeness in English. Students appeared to handle informal situations quite well, whereas they fell short when faced with more formal contexts. The results might imply that pragmatic competence is neglected in EFL classrooms. The findings in the article were, to a large extent, supported by the results of the investigation conducted among the three teachers. They expressed insecurity in terms of teaching pragmatic competence, and indicated that other aspects of language were more important, such as grammar, reading and writing. They therefore seemed to ignore the central position that pragmatic competence and knowledge of politeness conventions is given in the English subject curriculum.

Forord

Å skrive en masteroppgave har vært en krevende og omfattende prosess. Jeg har virkelig måtte utfordre meg selv og min egen evne til å strukturere, planlegge og gjennomføre et stort stykke arbeid. Dette har også vært svært spennende og lærerik periode, samt en erfaring som jeg verdsetter høyt og ikke ville vært foruten.

Jeg vil gjerne benytte denne sjansen til å takke de personene som har vært spesielt viktige i forbindelse med denne oppgaven. Først og fremst må jeg takke veilederen min, Andreas Lund. Hans hjelp, tilbakemeldinger og veiledning har vært uvurderlig. Vi har også hatt flere spennende samtaler om ulike fagrelaterte tema, som jeg har satt stor pris på og lært mye av. Jeg må også takke fantastiske venner og kollegaer som har hjulpet meg med å holde motivasjonen oppe, samt kommet med viktige innspill og gode råd. Her vil jeg spesielt berømme Caja, Nina og Hannah for den støtten de har gitt. Videre vil jeg rette en takk til de elever og lærere som har deltatt i undersøkelsene mine. Uten deres hjelp hadde det ikke blitt noen oppgave. Til slutt må jeg også nevne foreldrene mine, Solvei og Bjørn. Uten deres støtte og omsorg, hadde det å holde motivasjonen og arbeidslysten ved like blitt en mye vanskeligere oppgave.

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Introduction

In recent years, the Norwegian media has debated Norwegian EFL students and their overall proficiency in English. English is a mandatory subject in Norwegian schools from the second grade and to the end of the first year of high school (VG1). Students are therefore expected to be quite proficient users of English by the time they finish the VG1 level. However, as late as in February 2013, the Norwegian newspaper *Aftenposten* published an article declaring that Norwegian EFL students were no longer the most proficient EFL students in Europe. Morten Davidsen in EF Norway claims that this is a clear indication of the level of Norwegian EFL learners' competence in English. He argues that Norwegians are not as proficient in English as we often wish to believe. We are not at the level we should be in terms of English proficiency. He believes that teachers and educational authorities should ask themselves why this is the case (Davidsen in Moe 2013). Furthermore, Glenn Ole Hellekjær states that, in general, Norwegians believe that they are quite proficient in English. However, he goes on to say that "this does not mean that we are able to utilize English in a professional environment (...) this is where Norwegians overestimate their own abilities. You cannot participate in international negotiations with high school English" (Hellekjær in Moe 2013: overvurderer oss selv-section, my translation). In other words, Norwegians seem to lack the ability to adjust their language and means of expression according to various contexts and interlocutors.

Moreover, in order to master the English language it is not enough to have a broad vocabulary, errorless pronunciation and a profound knowledge of grammatical structures. This type of knowledge is of course valuable and highly relevant in communication situations, but it is far from enough if one seeks to master *all* the aspects of a language. Speakers need to be able to make judgments in terms of what is socially appropriate in a particular situation where one is communicating with a particular interlocutor and performing a specific type of speech act. Students need to be familiar with and able to utilize "techniques and strategies in speech acts in order to accomplish goals of establishing closer interpersonal relations and completing tasks efficiently through suitable language" (Lin 2007: 93). In order to be successful in this area of language use one needs to have developed pragmatic competence.

The English subject curriculum appreciates this fact, and the importance of students developing pragmatic competence in the L2 receives a heavy emphasis, both in the description of the objectives of the subject as well as in the presentation of the competency aims for the various levels of English instruction (Utdanningsdirektoratet 2010). Norwegian EFL students are clearly expected to develop a fairly advanced level of pragmatic competence. A central aspect of this competence is the ability to adapt to a culture's politeness convention.

How Norwegians behave and, in particular, how we express politeness, has been a widely debated topic. Often people of nationalities other than Norwegian describe us as impolite and even rude. In 2006 Åmås published an article called "Typisk norsk å være uhøflig". He discussed the relationship that Norwegians have to the concept of politeness. In his article, he stated that "Norwegians are characterized by a significant lack of common decency" (Åmås 2006: introduction-section: my translation). He also claimed that Norwegians often seem to prefer what is perceived as "real" and "authentic" to politeness, which is considered to be insincere and superficial (Åmås 2006). Longva has also contributed in this debate over Norwegians and the manner in which we express politeness. She argued that an expression as simple as "please" is a rare phenomenon in the Norwegian language. Instead, Norwegians prefer to use other verbal and non-verbal signals to achieve the same effect the British achieve with a simple "please". (Longva 2004). She also touches upon the same point that Åmås made: Norwegians tend to avoid explicit expression of politeness in fear of being interpreted as insincere. In English-speaking countries, phrases such as "please" and "how are you" function as a way of maintaining social relationship. Norwegians, on the other hand, perceive these as meaningless. Instead, they are concerned with the real, genuine meaning of words (Longva 2004).

Fretheim points out that it would be "a gross misunderstanding to claim that Norwegians do not pay any attention to the negative or positive face wants of their interlocutors" (Fretheim 2005 in Johansen 2008: 2). Moreover, very little research has been done in the field of pragmatics and politeness in Norway, and there is therefore very little evidence to support the claim that Norwegians are an impolite group of people. Despite this fact, I feel that it is safe to argue that the manner in which Norwegians express politeness is fairly different from, for example, British or American politeness norms.

My personal interest in and fascination with the topic of pragmatics and politeness began to develop in the fall of 2010, when I started my first year working as an English teacher in a Norwegian high school. One of the first things I noticed when I got to know the students was the manner in which they addressed each other and their teachers. This was done in a highly informal manner. I often experienced being addressed as for example “hey you” and “hey Lady”. Some students also found it appropriate to just snap their fingers in order to get my attention. In the lunchroom I learned that most of my colleagues had had similar experiences. This surprised me. When I was a student in high school, it would have been unthinkable to address a teacher in the manner described above. This led me to wonder: if students lack a sufficient understanding of how to address their interlocutors in an appropriate manner in Norwegian, how capable are they of doing this in English?

The way to express oneself appropriately and in a manner that is perceived as polite often becomes even more difficult when a language other than one’s mother tongue is involved. It has been stated that “different cultures are thought to exhibit different communicative behaviours, which again reflect different hierarchies of cultural values” (Røkaas 2000 in Johansen 2008: 2). Therefore, in order to be able to thoroughly investigate Norwegian EFL students and their knowledge of L2 pragmatic and politeness norms and conventions, I chose to adapt this as the focus of my master thesis.

1.1 The structure of the thesis

I have chosen to structure this master’s thesis in a somewhat untraditional manner for a thesis at this level. Its structure resembles those used in PhD theses in that it is article-based. It consists of an article (Brubæk 2012, published in *Acta Didactica Norge* in the fall of 2012 - <http://adno.no/index.php/adno/article/view/250>) and a so-called extended abstract. This term is usually used in article-based PhD theses that are based on three separate articles. The extended abstract serves as a means by which to draw lines between the individual articles and it also creates a context that helps to demonstrate how the findings presented in the articles are relevant and complement each other. However, a master’s thesis is not as extensive and elaborate as a PhD thesis. Therefore, even though this thesis includes only one article, I have chosen to borrow the term of extended abstract in order to refer to the text written to support the article I have written and the findings and implications presented here.

I chose this type of structure after thorough discussion with my advisor and other experienced researchers in the field of didactics.

The article presents an investigation of 40 Norwegian EFL students at the VG1 level and their level of pragmatic competence. The analysis is based on data collected by means of a discourse-completion test. In order to analyze these data, I have used the theory of face-threatening acts developed by Brown and Levinson (1987). In the discussion, I discuss the results of the analysis and present various theories and implications that can help create a comprehensive picture of the students' pragmatic competence and knowledge of politeness norms and conventions in the L2. In the first chapter of the extended abstract I focus on explaining the most important aspects of this theory as well as on examining the most relevant points of criticism directed towards Brown and Levinson's theory. In Chapter two, I present an additional study that is meant to supplement the most interesting findings in the article. This study is based on information provided by three teacher informants collected during a process of semi-structured interviews. In this part of the thesis, I try to demonstrate how the two studies I have conducted complement each other. In addition, I reflect on the various challenges that a teacher has to face and overcome when teaching pragmatics.

Pragmatic Competence in English at the VG1 level: To what extent are Norwegian EFL students able to adapt to contextual demands when making request in English?

Abstract

The present article presents an investigation of Norwegian students of English as a foreign language (EFL) and their pragmatic competence in English. The importance of developing such a competence receives a strong focus in the English subject curriculum. However, very few studies have been conducted in the field of pragmatics in Norway, and even fewer Norwegian studies have focused on students' pragmatic competence in a second language. The purpose of this study was therefore to investigate whether Norwegian EFL students would be familiar with and show awareness of English politeness norms and pragmatic conventions when having to communicate in English. Would they be able to adapt their language, choice of strategy and level of formality to the contextual demands when making requests in a second language (L2)? Forty students answered a simplified version of a discourse completion test (DCT) consisting of four different situations in which the students had to make requests. The results, which were analyzed by means of Brown and Levinson's theory of face threatening acts, indicated that most of the students were at one of the beginning stages of English pragmatic development. Their language use was characterized by first language (L1) transfer and overuse of familiar and informal expressions. When faced with more formal and demanding situations, they fell short and clearly lacked the knowledge and competence that would allow them to communicate successfully. It can be argued that these findings might indicate a lack of focus in Norwegian schools when it comes to developing students' pragmatic competence. If this is true, an important part of the subject curriculum is being neglected.

1.0 Introduction

In 2006, the Norwegian educational authorities adapted the Knowledge Promotion Reform (LK06), which was to serve as the national curriculum for the years 1–13 in Norwegian schools. Students were now, with the guidance and help of their teachers, to strive to develop a certain level of competence in the various subjects, and each subject curriculum comprised elaborate descriptions of the expected level of competence as well as a series of competence aims. The English subject curriculum emphasizes, among other things, the importance of students developing knowledge of L2 (second or foreign language) politeness norms and pragmatic conventions.

Knowing how to be polite and taking social conventions into consideration in any number of linguistic situations are (...) important skills to master. This goes hand in hand with adapting the language to the recipient and the situation, including distinguishing between formal and informal, written and spoken registers. (Utdanningsdirektoratet 2010, Main Subject Areas section)

However, intending students to develop a certain competence is one thing.

Whether students manage to reach the goals set by the educational authorities is a completely different story. For her master thesis, Johansen (2008) investigated how Norwegian advanced EFL learners chose to express gratitude in English. She found that

the participants [knew] how to express gratitude, but that they [did] not know when to use the different strategies they [knew] and that they [assumed] universality of the rules and principles that govern sociopragmatic behavior in Norway and thus [applied] these rules or principles to English (Johansen 2008, p. 126).

This study was conducted at university level, but the same results would most likely be found at lower levels of English acquisition as well. Either way, Johansen's findings are worrying. By successfully passing the VG1 course (first year of high school) in English, Norwegian students should, in theory, be highly skilled users of English. They should be able to communicate successfully in various types of contexts, manage to read and understand English textbooks and follow lectures in English at university level.

Inspired by Johansen's work, I chose to conduct a smaller but similar study during spring 2011. I investigated to what extent Norwegian EFL learners at the VG1 level were aware of and familiar with the politeness norms and pragmatic conventions of the English language. The analysis of the results revealed that "most of the students tended to rely on one single

formulation, regardless of the context or whom they were addressing. Their registers were also strongly marked by informality” (Brubæk 2011: 12).

Johansen’s and my own findings indicate a lack of knowledge of the politeness norms and the pragmatic features of English among Norwegian students. Moreover, the findings indicate that the teaching of pragmatics in Norwegian schools is not done in a satisfactory manner, if done at all. These implications are potentially highly important and relevant in terms of developing a more thorough understanding of the quality of Norwegian EFL students’ language competence and should thus be given more attention in research. For this article, I have therefore chosen to conduct a study similar to the one conducted spring 2011. My research question is as follows:

To what extent are Norwegian EFL students at the VG1 level able to adapt their language, choice of strategy and level of formality to contextual demands when making requests in English?

In order to answer this question, I asked forty students at the VG1 level to answer a simplified version of a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) (Blum-Kulka 1982, in Billmyer & Varghese 2000: 517). A DCT is a written test of oral skills, and is a widely used data-collection method in the field of pragmatics. The DCT used for this study included four situations in which the students had to make requests in English. Each situation varied in terms of the required degree of formality and level of politeness. The analysis will focus on how well the students managed to solve the tasks in terms of politeness and pragmatic competence. The discussion will elaborate on and discuss the results in further detail. Finally, I want to stress that references made to *English* in the article are references to British English. Norwegian students are not obliged to study and/or apply British language norms when utilizing English in class or on exams. They might just as well choose to adapt to other standards of English, e.g. American English. There are likely to be differences among the various standards in terms of politeness norms and pragmatic conventions, but for this article I have chosen to focus on British English.

2.0 Theoretical Background

Pragmatic competence and *politeness* are two fairly vague terms, covering a variety of different concepts and are therefore not easily defined. According to the Common European Framework of Reference, a person’s pragmatic competence and knowledge of politeness

norms refer to two separate competences. The former refers to functional use of language, “[e.g.] (...) the production of speech acts (...), drawing on scenarios or scripts of interactional exchanges (...)” (Council of Europe 2001; 13). Knowledge of politeness norms, on the other hand, forms part of a person’s sociolinguistic competence. “Through its sensitivity to social conventions (rules of politeness (...)) the sociolinguistic component strictly affects all language communication between representatives of different cultures (...)” (Council of Europe 2001:13).

Yule (1996) emphasizes that pragmatics is the study of language in use and explains it by discussing a variety of complex concepts, such as *speaker meaning*, i.e. how a speaker communicate his or her intentions and how these are interpreted by the hearer, *contextual meaning*, i.e. how context influences what is said as well as where, how and when an utterance is produced, *inferences*, i.e. how more is being communicated than what is said, and *the expression of relative distance*, i.e. how closeness, physical or social, affects a speaker’s judgment of how elaborate an utterance needs to be (Yule 1996: 3). By covering such a large number of sub-concepts in his definition, one can claim that Yule considers knowledge of a language’s politeness norms to be part of a person’s pragmatic competence. In order to demonstrate politeness, a speaker needs to be able to recognize the contextual demands of a situation, recognize the relative distance between him/herself and the hearer, etc.

Several other researchers have discussed pragmatics and its connection to politeness as well. Austin (1962) focuses on the concept of *speech acts*, e.g., acts of communication. He recognizes the fact that “people do more things with words than convey information (...)” (Bach n.d.: 2). Speech acts are generally given specific labels, such as request, apology, etc. Austin emphasizes the role of speaker’s intentions and hearer’s inferences. A speaker will normally expect the hearer to recognize his/her communicative intentions, and these will often involve demonstrating politeness at some level (Yule 1996: 47). Grice (1989) operates with a *principle of cooperation*, which consists of a series of subprinciples or *maxims*. It refers to the assumption of cooperation in conversation (Yule 1996). “In this (...) [it] has the function of regulating what we say so that it contributes to assumed (...) discoursal goal[s]” (Leech, 1983: 82). A speaker thus risks being perceived as impolite if s/he violates this principle, e.g. by not providing the hearer with enough information for his/her utterance to be interpreted in the way intended. Leech (1983) introduces the *politeness principle*, which was clearly built on Grice’s principle of cooperation. Leech’s principle was proposed as a way of

explaining the role of politeness in conversations and that its role is “to maintain the social equilibrium and the friendly relations which enables us to assume that our interlocutors are being cooperative in the first place” (Leech 1983: 82). It also recognized the fact that there will be cultural differences when it comes to the maxims and what is considered polite.

Based on this selective review, I have chosen the following working definition of pragmatic competence, since it includes varying degrees of politeness in different cultures and contexts:

[Pragmatic] competence is the ability to comprehend and produce a communicative act (...) [and] includes one's knowledge about the social distance, social status between the speakers involved, the cultural knowledge such as politeness, and the linguistic knowledge explicit and implicit (Liu 2005: Definition section).

2.1 The LK06 and Politeness

Being able to express oneself appropriately, both in terms of recognizing a situation's contextual demands and one's own relationship to the interlocutor, is an important part of any language learner's competence. “Politeness conventions (...) vary from one culture to another and are a frequent source of inter-ethnic misunderstanding, especially when polite expressions are literally interpreted” (Council of Europe 2001: 119). The English subject curriculum recognizes this fact and states that students “must be able to distinguish between (...) formal and informal styles (...) [as well as] to take cultural norms and conventions into consideration” (Utdanningsdirektoratet 2010, the Objectives of the Subject section). In order to know what to say in what situations, language learners must develop the ability to interpret the demands of the situation and the context. In order to identify these demands, knowledge of the target culture as well as the appropriateness of the various registers in the target language is required. “Speakers may judge the social constraints (...) differently in one culture than another and if their judgments are carried over into their second language, this may cause misunderstandings” (Johansen 2008: 46).

The subject curriculum also states that students should be able to “select and use appropriate writing and speaking strategies that are adapted to a purpose and situation (...) [and] (...) describe and evaluate the effects of different verbal forms of expression” (Utdanningsdirektoratet 2010, Competence Aims After VG1/VG2 section). How we choose to express ourselves will always be interpreted and evaluated by our interlocutor(s). “Culturally colored interactional styles create culturally determined expectations and interpretative strategies, and can lead to breakdowns in intercultural and interethnic

communication” (Gumperz 1978, in Blum-Kulka et al. 1989: 1). If the hearer misinterprets our intentions as speakers, or if we ignore cultural, social and/or politeness conventions when making an utterance, both participants in a conversation might end up feeling offended and hurt.

In this context, we need to consider the concept of *face*. “Face means the public self-image of a person (...) [and] it refers to that emotional and social sense of self that everyone has and expects everyone else to recognize” (Yule 1996: 60). Acting polite therefore means knowing how to show awareness and respect for another person’s face.

2.2 Brown and Levinson’s Theory of Face Threatening Acts

Brown and Levinson (1987) distinguish between a person’s negative and positive face. “(...) negative face is the need to be independent and positive face is the need to be connected” (Yule 1996: 62). Normally, interlocutors will work together in order to maintain and show respect for each other’s face wants. However, “certain kinds of acts intrinsically threaten face, namely those acts that by their nature run contrary to the face wants of the addressee and/or of the speaker” (Brown & Levinson 1987: 65), i.e. face threatening acts (FTA). Another central aspect of Brown and Levinson’s theory is the distinction between positive and negative politeness. The former “is oriented toward the positive face of H [the addressee], the positive self-image he claims for himself (...) [while the latter] is oriented mainly toward partially satisfying (...) H’s negative face, his basic want to maintain claims of territory and selfdomination” (Brown & Levinson 1987: 70).

An interlocutor can choose to perform the FTA or not. If a speaker has to perform the FTA, s/he can use a variety of strategies in order to minimize the potential threat of the act (see figure 1a).

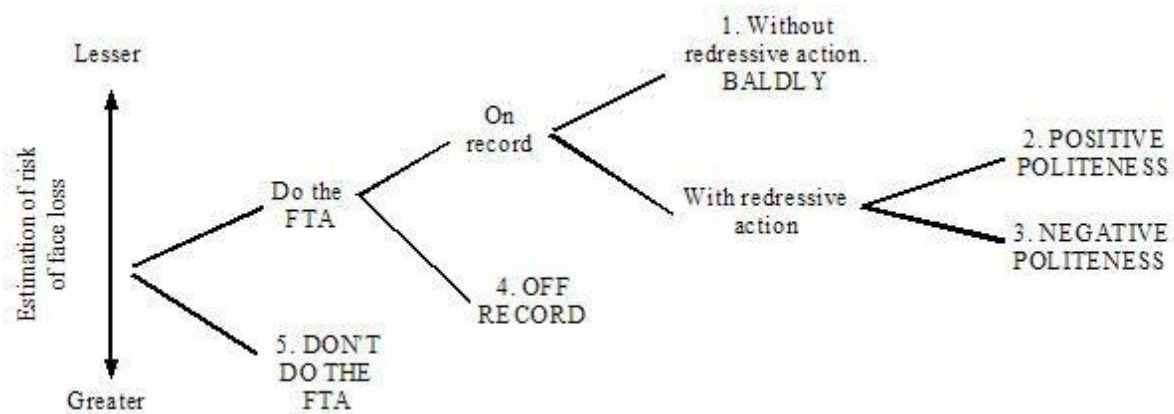


Figure 1a; *Circumstances determining choice of strategy (Brown & Levinson 1987: 60).*

By doing an FTA off record, e.g. by simply stating ‘I forgot my cell phone’ when wanting your friend to lend you his or her phone, “there is more than one unambiguously attributable intention so that the actor cannot be held to have committed himself to one particular intent” (Brown & Levinson 1987: 69). However, one also risks that the hearer misinterprets his conversational intentions. By going on record with an utterance “it is clear to participants what communicative intentions led the actor to do (the act) (...)” (Brown & Levinson 1987: 69). These FTAs can either be performed baldly without redress or with redressive action. The former “involves doing it in the most direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way possible (...). This type of FTA should preferably only be used when the need for efficiency or urgency is more important than the face wants of the participants (...)” (Brown & Levinson 1987: 69), e.g. when calling for help. An FTA with redressive action demonstrates an attempt “to counteract the potential face damage of the FTA by doing it (...) with such modifications or additions, that indicate clearly that no such face threat is intended or desired” (Brown & Levinson 1987: 69-70), e.g., “I’m sure you must be very busy, but...” (Brown & Levinson 1987: 188). This type of FTA will result in either negative or positive politeness.

In order to choose the most appropriate strategy, Brown and Levinson argue that we must consider the relationship between three independent variables: “Social Distance (D) between the speaker and hearer, (...) Relative Power (P) of the speaker with respect to the hearer, (...) and Absolute Ranking (R) of impositions in the culture (...)” (Fraser 1990: 230). These variables can be used to calculate the seriousness, or the *weightiness*, of an FTA. A speaker will choose a strategy that reflects the seriousness of the FTA. However, it is important to be aware of the fact that these variables do not refer to actual distance and actual power. They

simply refer to the interlocutors' *assumptions* of these variables (Brown & Levinson 1987). In the analysis of the students' responses, the focus will first and foremost be on their knowledge of D and P.

3.0 Method

Forty students at the VG1 level participated in the study. Participation was voluntary. All students are currently attending the high school where I work. This is therefore clearly a convenience sample. It is also a rather small sample, and one can therefore not generalize to the population as a whole. However, the students had gone to different junior high schools and the study was conducted only a few weeks after they started their first year of high school. Their level of competence would thus still mostly be a result of what they had acquired in junior high school. It was therefore assumed that, for the purpose of this paper, the sample population offered a satisfactory representation of EFL students at the VG1 level.

The students were given 60 minutes to answer the questionnaire. I introduced the test session by talking them through the questionnaire, explaining difficult words and allowing students to ask questions for clarification. I did not, however, give the test takers any information in terms of what I was looking for in their answers, as I did not want to lead their answers in any particular direction. Rather, I wanted them to react to and interpret the situations spontaneously and with only the knowledge and competence that they managed to apply there and then.

When collecting data for this article, I chose to utilize a simplified version of a DCT. A DCT is a well-known and frequently used method in research on pragmatics, as seen in, e.g., Eisenstein and Bodman (1986), Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) and Rose (1992). The test “[is] a written questionnaire containing short descriptions of a particular situation intended to reveal the pattern of a speech act being studied” (Nurani 2009: 667). My questionnaire consisted of four descriptions of different situations in which students had to make requests. These situations all represented different levels of formality and thus required the students to apply various politeness strategies (see appendix 1).

3.1 Using DCT as a Method of Data Collection

When conducting research on pragmatics “all data should (ideally) come from ‘natural conditions’” (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989: 13). However, collecting samples of natural,

spontaneous speech is difficult and time-consuming, and we might best settle for “authentic’ data and stereotypic aspects of speech behaviour” (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989: 13). Since the DCT is a written test used to collect samples of spoken language, one loses some of the aspects of spoken interaction, such as turn-taking, hesitation and avoidance strategies. Moreover, Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993) discovered that “(...) DCT is notable to bring out the extended negotiation which commonly occurs in authentic discourses due to the absence of interaction between interlocutors.” When performing a speech act such as making a request, the speaker will normally produce the request during the course of a speech event, where “participants interact via language in some conventional way to arrive at some outcome” (Yule 1996: 57). In a DCT this aspect of interaction will be lost. In the DCT used to collect data for this article, students were only asked to state how they would express specific requests in various situations, i.e. a single response, not to describe complete speech events, i.e. to describe the entire course of interaction. One can therefore claim that some important aspects of the students’ pragmatic competence are neglected in my research.

Moreover, the situations described in a DCT are hypothetical situations. Since there is no real communication, there are no real consequences for the speaker and the chosen strategy, and the test takers might risk using a strategy they would not normally apply (Nurani 2009). Besides, the students might not have any real experience with the situations in the DCT, and this might pose an additional challenge for some when responding to the test prompts. Thus, a DCT might not provide a researcher with reliable information about what speakers actually do in real-life interaction. However, a DCT can provide us with important information about what people most likely would say in various situations (Golato 2003).

Using written elicitation techniques enables us to obtain more stereotyped responses; that is ‘the prototype’ of the variants occurring in the individual’s actual speech (...). It is precisely this more stereotyped aspect of speech behavior that we need for crosscultural comparability. (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989: 13)

Beebe and Cummings (1996) found a strong congruence between responses given on a DCT and the ones found in natural communication, and they therefore claim that the DCT is a reliable method for collecting data for pragmatic research.

In order to collect language samples that are as natural as possible, it can be claimed that the prompts in the DCT need to be as relevant as possible, containing information about time of day, location, the relationship between the interlocutors, etc. (Johansen 2008). In a real-life

situation, a speaker would have had access to this information, while in a DCT this information needs to be provided. In the test used for this article, the situations contained descriptions of location, the speaker-hearer relationship and the speaker's communicative intentions. Some researchers claim that this amount of information is too small to enable the test to elicit any speech data that might resemble natural speech. In order for this to be possible, one would need to develop prompts that give the test takers additional information about the audience, "the gender and name of the interlocutor, (...) social distance, social dominance, the length of acquaintanceship, [and] the frequency of interaction(...)" (Billmyer & Varghese 2000: 522). Without this information, the collection of natural samples will not be possible. However, Billmyer and Varghese (2000) compared non-native speakers (NNS) and native speakers (NS) of English and their responses to prompts with the same amount of information as in the one used for my version of the DCT and to prompts with a much larger amount of information, as described above. Their research showed that

the level of directness of request act strategies for NNSs does not appear to be sensitive to the type and amount of information in the situational prompt. A closer look at the distribution of (...) strategies by level of directness (...) shows hardly any variation between versions (Billmyer & Varghese 2000: 528).

I therefore argue that the prompts used for my version of the DCT are appropriate for the purpose of this research (see appendix 1).

4.0 Results and Analysis

In the following, I analyze the students' answers by applying Brown and Levinson's theory of FTAs. As previously mentioned, the students had to consider four situations (see appendix 1) when answering the questionnaire. In all the situations, the speech acts are directed towards a person's negative face and thus demand a focus on negative politeness. The speaker needs to produce "a speech act that performs the function of minimizing the particular imposition that the FTA unavoidably effects" (Brown & Levinson 1987: 129).

However, when analyzing the data, I realized that situations 1-3 were somewhat similar in terms of appropriate strategies. The imposition was not great in any of them. In situation 1, students were to ask a stranger for directions, which is considered "free goods" and is included in "those things and services (...) which all members of the public may reasonably demand from one another" (Brown & Levinson 1987: 80). A high level of politeness was therefore not required. In situation 2 and 3 the social distance was not great, considering that

the speaker and hearer were classmates and close friends. Producing a request is an imposition, but due to the small social distance, the level of politeness demanded by the situation was not great. In order to avoid extensive repetitions, I decided to only present the analysis of one of these situations in this article. Situation 3 was chosen by means of a process of random selection.

The following analysis will therefore focus on situations 3 and 4, which differed greatly in terms of social distance, relative power, level of imposition and the degree of politeness required. The former was quite informal and most likely familiar to the students, while the latter was formally demanding and might pose a challenge to the respondents. By choosing to cut two situations from the analysis, I might have lost potentially interesting statistical data. On the other hand, it might have allowed me to gain a more profound understanding of the students' competence as reflected in the two remaining situations.

4.1 Situation 3: Borrowing Money from a Friend

This situation involves two friends, two equals, and the social distance between the speaker and the addressee is not great. However, "the basic assumption, from the perspective of politeness, is that face is typically at risk when the self needs to accomplish something involving other" (Yule 1996: 67). Given the fact that the speaker is asking the hearer if she can lend him/her money, we can say that by performing this speech act, the speaker is imposing on the hearer. Even though speaker and hearer are socially close and the threat of performing the request can be said to be low, the speaker could be said to be in a power-inferior relationship to the hearer and a certain degree of politeness is still required.

"The British use a (...) variety of strategies avoiding bald on-record even when the threat is perceived to be low (...). [Users] of BE use more conventional (...) indirectness (...)" (Stewart 2005:117). *Conventional indirectness* can be described as a compromise between communicating one's intentions indirectly and going on record. It focuses on negative politeness and refers to "the use of phrases and sentences that have contextually unambiguous meanings which are different from their literal meanings" (Brown & Levinson 1987: 132). Furthermore, the British use a variety of external modifiers in order to fulfill one's communicative intentions e.g. through the use of questions and the past tense, i.e. 'could you/would you'-formulations (Stewart 2005). In order to avoid coming across as rude, it is

also quite normal to produce what is referred to as a pre-request, such as “excuse me” (Yule 1996).

Based on this, the students should ideally demonstrate awareness of the hearer’s face wants by doing an FTA with redressive action focusing on negative politeness and being conventionally indirect by using various modifiers - with or without a pre-request.

Table 1:
Formulations and strategies used when asking to borrow money from a friend.

Formulations	Percentage	Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Could I please borrow some money (from you)? - Could you please lend me some money? 	32%	On record with redressive action → focuses on negative politeness → conventionally indirect with question and use of past tense → without pre-request
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can I please borrow some money? - Can you please lend me some money? 	63%	On record with redressive action → focuses on negative politeness → conventionally indirect with question → without pre-request
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I have to borrow money from you! - Let me borrow money from you. 	5%	Baldly, on record, without redressive action
Total (n = 40):	100%	

95% of the students applied strategies identical to the strategy described in the previous paragraph, while 32 % chose to use ‘could I/could you’ formulations. None of these used a pre-request. By using such a request, one would probably be perceived as being slightly more polite and showing more concern in terms of protecting the hearer’s negative face than when applying a strategy *without* a pre-request. However, the majority’s choice of strategy still satisfies the contextual demands in terms of the required level of politeness.

Based on the results, it seems as if a large majority of the students are aware that conventional indirectness is an important feature of the English language. However, one cannot claim, based on these results alone, that the students really are familiar with all the areas of use for this specific strategy. Besides,

[the] safest politeness strategy for a Norwegian performing an act of requesting (...) is to abandon the indicative (i.e. “can you” formulations”). (...) The past tense (i.e. ‘could you’ formulations) (...) can be a sign that the state of affairs described is hypothetical rather than factual, as in English (Fretheim 2005: 157-158).

This could mean that the students' seemingly convincing knowledge of appropriate politeness strategies in English is in fact an example of what is known as *L1 transfer*. In terms of pragmatic competence, L1 transfer refers to the phenomenon of transferring and applying one's L1 pragmatic knowledge in L2 situations (Ellis 1997). Are the students successfully applying their knowledge of their mother tongue in an L2 situation, without possessing any real knowledge of L2 politeness strategies and conventions? Assuming that one can safely apply L1 pragmatic patterns in L2 situations, might suggest that students believe that there exist certain universal norms that one can rely on when realizing speech acts in an L2. Another possible explanation of the seemingly well-developed competence among the students in terms of showing awareness of politeness norms in English could, in other words, be due to reliance on a false assumption that politeness is expressed by following the patterns of a set of universal norms.

4.2 Situation 4: Asking for a Pay Raise

This situation differs from the one in 4.1 in that it asks the students to formulate a request on behalf of Mary - not themselves. This presents the students with a great challenge in terms of interpreting and relating to the situation and has the potential of separating students with profound pragmatic knowledge and skills from those with only superficial knowledge. Besides, of all situations in the questionnaire, this situation is the most marked in terms of politeness. The speaker is in a power-inferior relationship with the addressee, given the fact that the hearer is the speaker's boss. The speaker is asking for a pay raise, which is a fairly risky request. The degree of imposition is therefore high. According to Brown and Levinson, it would be appropriate to demonstrate negative politeness through giving deference in this type of situation. The speaker will thus demonstrate that s/he recognizes the addressee's face wants and that s/he is aware of the addressee's right not to be imposed on. Moreover, the speaker "communicates that any infringement of H's territory is recognized as such and is not undertaken lightly" (Brown & Levinson 1987: 187). One should therefore expect the speaker's speech act to be marked by a high level of politeness and to demonstrate respect and awareness of the addressee's negative face through giving deference.

Table 2;
formulations and strategies used when asking one's boss for a pay raise.

Formulations	Percentage	Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Could I get a pay raise? - Could you give me a pay raise? 	42.5%	On record with redressive action → focuses on negative politeness → conventionally indirect with question and use of past tense → without pre-request
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can I (please) have/get a pay raise? 	35%	On record with redressive action → focuses on negative politeness → conventionally indirect with question → without pre-request
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I would like a pay raise. - It would only be fair of you to give me a raise. - I think it's time for a pay raise. - I deserve a pay raise. - I want more money. - I think I should have a raise. 	22.5%	Baldly, on record, without redressive action
Total (n = 40):	100%	

None of the students applied the strategy described in the previous paragraph. 77,5 %, chose a strategy similar to the one described in 4.1 and 42,5% used 'could I'-formulations. This could be an example of how students overuse and rely on well-known fixed expressions. An NS would interpret the situation and modify his/her language and choice of politeness strategy accordingly. L2 learners, on the other hand, often cling to "the same range of request strategies irrespective of whether they [are] talking to the teacher or other students" (Ellis 1997, 10). It has also been said that extensive use of ability strategies [(could I/you)] is a major characteristic of the pragmatic competence of beginner EFL learners (Hill 1997, in Kasper & Rose 2002). These results might therefore indicate both that the students have only managed to learn one way in which to make requests in English and that they are still at the one of the lowest stages of pragmatic development in English.

Conversely, 22.5 % of the students chose strategies that were "closely linked to the act of going baldly on record and verbally attacking the addressee" (Brubæk 2011: 12), e.g., "In the last time I have been working my ass off. Personally, I think that I deserve a pay raise after all the work I've done". It is interesting to see how insecure many of the students seem to be in this situation. In 4.1, the majority of the students demonstrated awareness of the hearer's face by applying the strategy that was considered the most polite and socially appropriate. In this case, however, the majority of the students ignored the risks of producing the FTA and the damage it does to the addressee's face. They cross over to the side of explicit rudeness. This might indicate that more formally demanding situations are unfamiliar to the students

and they find them difficult to interpret and handle. The students seem to lack the formal registers needed to solve the task in a socially acceptable manner. They appear unable to vary their use of requests and modify their choice of strategies and language according to the demands of the situation.

On the other hand, one must not rule out the possible effect of the students having to produce the request on behalf of Mary, not themselves. The apparent lack of knowledge and ability to communicate appropriately in this situation might simply be a result of difficulties with relating to 1) Mary and her situation or 2) the situation in general. Some students might not possess relevant experience with this type of formal situation or have work experience in general, and this lack of experience might have caused additional problems when producing a response to this situation.

5.0 Discussion

Only a few studies have been conducted in the field of pragmatics in Norway, e.g. Røkaas (2000), Gray (2005) and Johansen (2008). As far as I can see, the latter study is the only Norwegian study that has been conducted using DCT as a method of data collection. Johansen (2008) investigated how Norwegian advanced EFL learners chose to express gratitude in English. It discovered that the participants knew the basic patterns and strategies for expressing gratitude in the L2, but they lacked knowledge of how and when to produce these patterns and use these strategies appropriately. Moreover, the participants assumed some form of universality in terms of pragmatic principles and often relied on their pragmatic competence in their L1 when communicating in the L2.

The goal of this article was to investigate to what extent Norwegian EFL students are able to adapt their language, choice of strategies and level of formality to contextual demands when realizing requests in English. The analysis did not provide any clear-cut answers, but it did seem to indicate several things. Moreover, some of the findings were quite similar to those of Johansen (2008). On the one hand, the analysis suggests that the students seem to be aware of concepts such as social distance and power relationships between the speakers involved in informal situations. However, are these results really proof of a profound knowledge of politeness norms, or is it merely a case of L1 pragmatic transfer? On the other hand, the results of the analysis of situation 4 seem to indicate that there is a lack of knowledge among

Norwegian students when it comes to handling formal situations that require a higher level of politeness and more sophisticated strategies for protecting the addressee's face.

Does this mean that the students only know how to handle informal interaction between equals and that they will be unsuccessful when trying to interact in more formally demanding situations?

5.1 Pragmatic Competence in L1 and L2

The subject curriculum explicitly states that developing the students' pragmatic competence should be a major goal in English teaching in Norway. However, my findings indicate that students have acquired productive knowledge of only one or two strategies for making polite requests in English. This is worrying considering the fact that a lack of pragmatic knowledge might lead to a communication breakdown that will hinder fruitful participation in the L2 culture. "No 'error' of grammar can make a speaker seem so incompetent, so inappropriate, so foreign as the kind of trouble a learner gets into when he or she (...) disregards a language's rule of use" (Rintell & Mitchell 1989 in Blum- Kulka et al. 1989: 248).

In 4.1, the analysis of the results suggested that the students were somewhat reliant on their L1 when attempting to communicate in the L2. When asking a friend to lend them money, many students appear to have transferred pragmatic patterns of their L1 and applied these in an L2 situation. In this particular situation, the strategy of transferring and applying L1 knowledge in an L2 situation proved successful, but this will not likely always be the case. Other studies have reached similar conclusions. Takahashi (1996) found that Japanese EFL students, no matter the level of general language proficiency, "relied on their first language request conventions or strategies in second language request realization" (Takahashi 1996, in Kasper & Rose 2002: 156). Whether this was the case for the students who participated in this study must be validated in further research.

5.2 Contextual Demands

The choice of strategy in 4.1 might also indicate that many of the students rely on a false assumption of the existence of universal politeness norms and pragmatic conventions. Kasper and Rose (2002) suggest that some knowledge of politeness and pragmatics is universal. "Universal pragmatic competence minimally comprises implicit knowledge and ability to use (...) [e.g.] specific communicative acts such as (...) requests (...) [and] politeness as a mutually face-saving strategy (...)" (Kasper & Rose 2002: 164-165). An adult learner of an

L2 can thus build on a large amount of prior knowledge when trying to develop his or her L2 competence. However, many language learners are unaware of the fact that there can be significant cultural differences when it comes to the realization of central speech acts (Eisenstein & Bodman 1986). Some knowledge is culture specific, and even adult learners have to acquire at least some new pragmatic and politeness conventions.

In 4.2, students were asked to produce a speech act in which they addressed their boss requesting a pay raise. The majority of the students seemed quite insecure in terms of handling the contextual demands of the situation. Most of them relied on the same strategies as they did in 4.1. This might indicate that the students are not familiar with these types of formally demanding situations. However, familiarity with the situation and its contextual demands is not necessarily enough to enable an NNS to express himself according to NS norms (Eisenstein & Bodman 1986). Other factors, such as “the complexity of language (...) (and) the language functions demanded by the situation (...) (and) the degree of cultural disorientation (...)” (Eisenstein & Bodman 1986: 174), play a major role. Therefore, one might be justified in claiming that, in addition to being unfamiliar with the situation, the students also lack knowledge of appropriate strategies that they can apply in more formally demanding situations.

5.3 Implications for Teaching

The results of both Johansen’s study (2008) and of the present analysis might indicate that the development of students’ pragmatic competence in Norwegian EFL classrooms is being neglected:

[In] order to fulfill the goals expressed in the LK06, the teaching of English as a foreign language in Norway needs to pay more attention to pragmatics features and the students’ comprehension, development and acquisition of different registers in English, both formal and informal (Brubæk 2011: 13).

Even though these claims need to be validated in further research, they can to some extent be supported by international research. It is, for example, possible to draw parallels between the findings in Johansen’s thesis and in the present article and the results of studies conducted internationally, e.g. Eisenstein and Bodman (1986) Bardovi-Harlig and Hatford (1993) and Blum-Kulka et al. (1989). These studies revealed some major differences between NS of English and NNS in terms of choice of strategy and formulation when realizing various types of speech acts.

Eisenstein & Bodman (1986) investigated expressions of gratitude. They found that even advanced EFL learners “had considerable difficulty adequately expressing gratitude in the target language. (...) Learners were often unable to approximate native idioms and routines” (Eisenstein & Bodman 1986: 176). Eisenstein & Bodman (1986) claimed that there is a need for a stronger focus on important language functions in school. A high proficiency in English in general does not necessarily equal well-developed pragmatic skills. In their study of gratitude expressions, they actually found the complete opposite. Moreover, they emphasize the fact that most students trying to acquire an L2 in a classroom context, as is the case for most Norwegian EFL learners, will need help from a teacher to be able to identify implicit values and beliefs in the L2 and to recognize culture specific pragmatic differences. Bardovi-Harlig (1996) claim “Learners either don’t receive the relevant input or don’t receive it from sources they consider relevant, or they may not notice the relevant input due to either lack of pragmatic awareness or possibly even grammatical competence” (1996: 23).

5.4 Pragmatics and Intercultural Communicative Competence

Michael Byram (1997) received a great deal of attention for his attempt to create a framework for the assessment of students’ *Intercultural Communicative Competence* (ICC). By drawing parallels between that and pragmatic competence, one might explain why Norwegian teachers seem to either neglect the teaching of or lack the competence required to teach an important part of any language learner’s competence. On the one hand, it is possible to argue that pragmatic competence is part of ICC. The *savoir of knowledge* includes knowledge of the target culture and of what is considered appropriate. *Savoir comprendre* refers to a person’s ability to interpret and comprehend aspects of the target culture. Moreover, *savoir s’engager* relates to the ability to evaluate a culture-specific aspect and successfully interact with individuals from the target culture based on the information gained from this evaluation (Byram 1997). On the other hand, ICC is much broader than pragmatic competence, and I have therefore chosen to refer to these as separate competences in order to create a comprehensive comparison.

Both ICC and pragmatic competence include attitudes, cultural knowledge and interpretation skills, and these can be neither taught nor assessed only by relying on traditional methods. In terms of these competences, what is not observable in student performance is just as important as what is observable. The fact that “there is an agreement in the educational (...)

profession that (...) performance measurement calls for examinees to demonstrate their capabilities (...) by creating some product (...) and that there is heavy reliance on observation (...)” (Byram 1997: 89) therefore causes a problem for the assessment of these two competences.

Moreover, Byram (1997) argues that in recent years there seems to be an increasing demand for holding educational institutions accountable for the quality of the education that they are providing.

[T]here is a tendency to seek modes of assessment which break knowledge and abilities into closely defined and observable sub-sets. These can then be related to the teaching process, by asking whether what has been taught has in fact been learned by students. (...) (Byram 1997: 96)

Since ICC does not live up to these ‘standards’, it tends to be neglected in the classroom. Its vagueness creates severe difficulties, especially when it comes to testing the level of competence the students have developed during a semester or a school year. The results of the analysis indicate that the same inability to break knowledge and ability into closely defined and observable sub-sets can be said for pragmatic competence as well - at least for the more complex aspects of this competence. There are those aspects that students seem perfectly capable of handling. The frequent use of ‘can/could you’ expressions in the students’ responses, for example, might indicate that the students find these familiar and easy to handle. According to Ellis (1997), the use of formulas and fixed expressions is a major characteristic of learner language. Moreover, the (over)use of these expressions suggests that they are easy to handle for teachers as well, in that they are easy to teach and easy to test. However, other aspects of pragmatic competence are difficult, maybe even impossible, to break down and define. The analysis in section 4 indicates that highly context-dependent, idiosyncratic expressions are difficult for students to apply, e.g. those expressions that are used in formally situations and involve pre-requests as well as conventional indirectness. These expressions are also likely to be significantly more challenging to demonstrate and teach in class. Besides, pragmatic competence is seemingly not definable in a way that all experts will agree on. How can we then expect teachers to be able to teach and test it and students to be able to acquire it?

6.0 Conclusion

In this article, I wanted to investigate the extent to which Norwegian EFL students are able to adapt their language, choice of strategies and level of formality to contextual demands when making requests in English. The analysis in 4.0-4.2 and the discussion in 5.0 both revealed that students seem to possess adequate knowledge of how to interact and produce speech acts in informal situations, even though this ability might also be the result of L1 transfer or reliance on a false assumption that a set of universal politeness norms and pragmatic conventions exist. In more formal situations, however, students fall short and are unable to produce speech acts according to L2 rules and conventions. Most students appear to be insecure and choose to rely on their knowledge of informal interaction, even though this is hardly appropriate in more formally demanding situations. These results might also indicate a lack of attention in Norwegian schools developing EFL students' pragmatic competence in English.

It is clear that the development of Norwegian students' pragmatic competence is an aspect of language learning that needs to receive more attention in Norway. More extensive study is needed in order to give more precise answers to the questions and implications discussed in this article. It would be an interesting challenge to conduct a similar study on a larger scale. Would the results be similar, or would there, for instance, be significant differences between different groups of students? Moreover, it will be important to investigate whether the development of students' pragmatic competence really is being neglected in Norwegian schools and, if so, map out the reasons why. Do textbooks and other sources of input used in the English classroom offer teaching and learning material of a sufficient quality? Is developing native-like pragmatic competence in a classroom context even a realistic goal? And what about students in the various teacher education programs? Do they receive instruction on how to teach pragmatics and, if so, to what extent? Considering the goals of the current curriculum, these are important questions to ask and investigate further.

Extended Abstract

*Digging deeper - additional comments
and reflections*

Chapter 1:

Brown and Levinson's theory under the microscope

1.0 Brown and Levinson's theory of FTAs

As discussed in the article, pragmatic competence and knowledge of politeness norms and conventions are recognized as central aspects of communication, both in the L1 and in the L2. Therefore, the development of L2 pragmatic competence among students has become a highly relevant issue for EFL teachers. If a person lacks knowledge of a culture's politeness norms and conventions this can cause severe "misunderstanding, misinterpretation and miscommunication between the speaker and the hearer, which in turn lead to" (Aridah n.d.: 2) a breakdown in communication. This breakdown often occurs due to differences in the means of expressing politeness in different cultures. "Although there are some universals in language usage concerning politeness, there are still some specific politeness phenomena across culture. These phenomena are potential sources of pragmatic failure especially for those who learn English as a foreign language" (Aridah n.d.: 2).

Pragmatic competence, especially the aspect of politeness, is fairly complex. Many researchers have tried to define politeness and its role in communication, and the various definitions and elaborations of the concept of politeness may vary greatly. For the analysis in section 4 in the article, I chose to apply one of the most widely used theories in this respect, namely Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness and face-threatening acts. Brown and Levinson first introduced their theory of politeness in 1978, and a revised version was published in 1987. The latter has been the point of departure for this study. Their theory is recognized as one of the most influential frameworks in politeness research so far, and is "a preferred framework, for example, in empirical work on particular types of speech acts in a wide range of languages and cultures and in cross-cultural work" (Vilkkı 2006: 325). However, it has also been the object of debate and exposed to heavy criticism. One major point of discussion is Brown and Levinson's claim of universality for their theory, "and at the heart of this discussion have been (...) [the] use of the term face and the conceptualisation of politeness as a set of rational strategies to soften the potentially unwelcome effects of face

threatening” (Vilkki 2006: 325). The main emphasis in this chapter will therefore be to elaborate on these widely debated aspects of Brown and Levinson’s theory, which are the notion of *face* and the various *face-saving* strategies and to present a thorough discussion of the main points of criticism in relation to these two aspects.

Please note that a short, comprehensive overview of Brown and Levinson’s theory can be found in section 2.2 of the article.

2.0 The notion of face

As stated, the notion of face is a central aspect of Brown and Levinson’s theory. “The face is understood as something that is emotionally invested, and that can be not only lost, but also maintained or enhanced” (Vilkki 2006: 324). Brown and Levinson did not, however, invent the notion of face. “The notion of face has been in use as a metaphor in different cultures of the world for a very long time” (Vilkki 2006: 325) In the folk lexicon of several languages, for example, we find expressions referring to face. In English we frequently hear of a person “losing face”, in Norwegian we talk about “å tape ansikt”, and in German we find the expression “das Gesicht verlieren“. These expressions are all related to the feeling of humiliation, the loss of reputation or the loss of respect from others (Martin 2012), and it is clear that losing face is something unpleasant and something a person will strive to avoid.

Various researchers have built their politeness theories around this notion of face, and Brown and Levinson were far from the first to do so. It has been claimed that

the study of face in sociolinguistics arose out of the need to understand how participants decide what their relative statuses are and what language they use to encode their assumptions about such differences in status, as well as their assumption about the face being presented by participants in communication” (Scollon & Scollon 2001 in Johansen 2008: 21)

In 1944, Hu published his research in which he focused on face in China. He described it “as an essentially public (...) concept” (Vilkki 2006: 326) that consists of two different notions; *lien* and *Mien-tzu*. The notion of *lien* depends on a person’s social status and is based on “the assumption of human nature as inherently good” (Hu 1944: 61). The society places great pressure on individuals to act according to moral codes and it expects each man and woman to adhere to the expectations that come with their social position in society (Hu 1944). *Mien-tzu*, on the other hand, can be earned. It refers to a person’s reputation in society and “is built

up through initial high position, wealth, power, ability, through cleverly establishing social ties to a number of prominent people, as well as through avoidance of acts that would cause unfavorable comment” (Hu 1944:61).

Erving Goffman (1967), whose notion of face drew on Hu’s theory, was one of Brown and Levinson’s greatest sources of inspiration. According to Goffman, face is “the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact” (Goffman 1967: 5). In every conversation that we participate in, we automatically take a stand, that is, we create our own interpretation of the situation and our interlocutors. This interpretation is communicated to the people around us both through verbal and non-verbal interaction, and it is the basis of how our interlocutors perceive our interpretation a person’s face is created. “A person tends to experience an immediate emotional response to the face which a contact with others allows him; (...) his ‘feelings become attached to it” (Goffman 1967: 6). If a person experiences that a face better than expected is established for him, he is likely to feel good about himself, whereas if the opposite happens he is likely to feel hurt and offended. “For Goffman face is a social attributed aspect of self that is on loan (...). It does not reside in or on the individual” (Watts 2003: 105).

A person is, however, not only emotionally involved in establishing his own face. He is also expected to demonstrate a certain level of consideration and empathy towards his interlocutors and to make an effort to maintain the face of others. How strongly a person is involved in establishing and maintaining his own face and the face of others also depend on the context, the interlocutors, and social norms. A person is likely to be more emotionally involved with establishing a positive face for himself and others in formally demanding situation, than in a situation where he is communicating with close friends.

Brown and Levinson’s notion of face resembles many of the aspects that we find in Goffman’s theory, even though their framework introduces some new, distinct aspects of face as well. Like Goffman, Brown and Levinson consider face to be a public self-image, and define it as an “emotional and social sense of self that everyone has and expects everyone else to recognize” (Yule 1996: 60). However, in contrast to Goffman who sees the construction of face as a continuous process of negotiation, Brown and Levinson base their notion of face on an individual’s personality, which is a stable set of values and an image of

self developed prior to an interaction. In other words, an interlocutor has “already constructed (...) a self-image that s/he *wants* to be upheld by society” (Watts 2003: 105). It is not renegotiable in the same sense as Goffman’s notion of face.

Moreover, while Goffman’s notion focuses on the interlocutors’ *positive* social value, Brown and Levinson claim that every individual has two types of face: a positive and a negative. The former refers to one’s wish to feel included and accepted, while the latter refers to one’s right to be independent, not to be imposed on, and to have freedom of action (Brown & Levinson 1987). It might be argued that this distinction between two types of face resemble Hu’s theory of the Chinese face and his distinction between *lien* and *Mien-tzu*. On the other hand, the manner in which the two types of face are defined in the two frameworks differs greatly. While Hu has a collectivistic focus and emphasizes how face is related to a person’s social position and how he is perceived by others in a social group, Brown and Levinson focus more on the individual and his emotional investment in face.

“People generally behave as if their expectations concerning their public self-image, or their *face wants*, will be respected” (Yule 1996: 61). Every individual in a social group is expected to cooperate with other members of that group and try to avoid harming each other’s face. There are, however, some speech acts that automatically pose a threat to a person’s face, “namely those acts that by their nature run contrary to the face wants of the addressee and/or of the speaker” (Brown and Levinson 1987: 65). In Brown and Levinson’s framework, these acts are referred to as face threatening acts (FTA). Some speech acts, such as requests, are directed towards a hearer’s negative face. The speaker risks producing a request the hearer cannot fulfill. If the hearer is forced to say no, he might feel embarrassed and offended. Other speech acts, such as thanking, are directed towards the positive face of the hearer and the negative face of the speaker. By performing this speech act the speaker makes the hearer feel included and appreciated. On the other hand, he also agrees to be in some kind of debt to the hearer, thus harming his own face.

3.0 Face-saving strategies: minimizing the threat of FTAs

There are several manners in which a person can save another person’s face, or his own face for that matter, and thus minimize the damage an FTA does to a person’s face. These manners or strategies are often somewhat culture specific, and all members in a social group

are usually expected to possess knowledge of and experience with these. Goffman operated with the term *face work*, which means “to designate the actions taken by a person to make whatever he is doing consistent with face. Face-work serves to counteract (...) events (...) (that) threaten face” (Goffman 1967: 12). Each individual has both a *defensive* orientation, i.e. strategies to save his own face, and a *protective* orientation, i.e. strategies to save the face of others. Moreover, Goffman views politeness and polite behavior, i.e. behavior that is meant to save face, as a habit and as a pre-planned, repetitive ritual or process that every member of a social group is familiar with. He also suggests that there is “a fixed repertoire of “possible practices”” (Goffman 1967: 13-14) that a person can choose between. In an *avoidance* process, a person can, e.g., avoid situations that might pose as a threat to face all together, stay off-topic, and be indirect, discrete and ambiguous, etc. In a *corrective* process, on the other hand, a person tries to compensate for a face threatening situation by, e.g., offering compensation, threatening his own face to save the face of others.

Brown and Levinson are clearly inspired by these theories. Their framework is, however, much more elaborate and offers a greater number of strategies for a speaker to choose between when trying to minimize the damage an FTA does to face. Brown and Levinson introduced five “super strategies” that a speaker can use when dealing with FTAs (see Figure 1b): don’t do the FTA, do the FTA off record, do the FTA baldly without redressive action, or do the FTA with redressive action. (Brown & Levinson 1987:92) In terms of the latter strategy, they distinguish between those acts that are directed towards a person’s positive face and thus result in positive politeness, and those that are directed towards negative face and result in negative politeness.

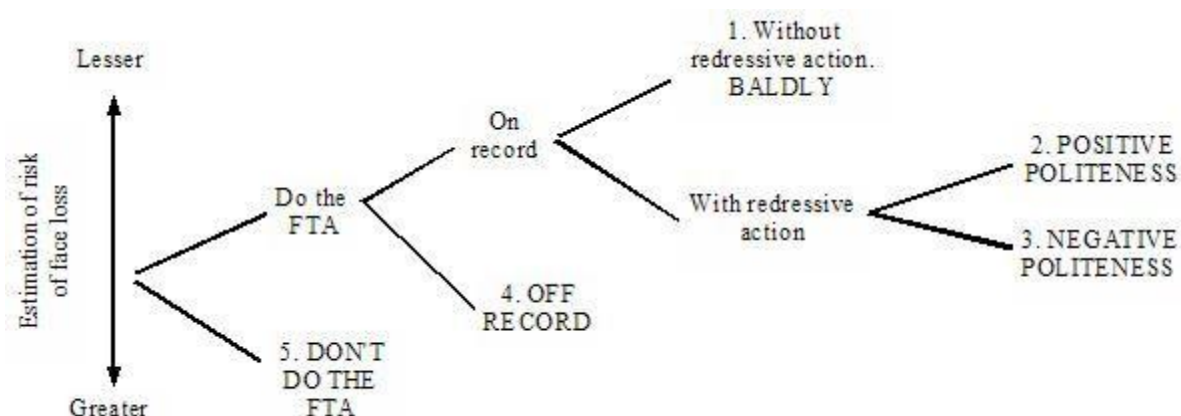


Figure 1b; the five “super strategies” (Brown & Levinson 1987; 60). See also page X in the article.

Brown and Levinson introduced 15 substrategies that can be applied when addressing a person's positive face and face wants. These can be divided into three categories (Brown & Levinson 1987: 102): *claim common ground* e.g. by using in-group identity markers e.g. "come here, mate" (Brown & Levinson 1987: 108); *convey that the speaker and the hearer (H) are cooperators* e.g. by including both the S and H in the activity e.g. "let's stop for a bite" (Brown & Levinson 1987: 127); or *fulfill H's wants* by giving gifts to the hearer e.g. by demonstrating sympathy, understanding. Brown and Levinson also presented 10 strategies that can be applied when a speaker is expressing negative politeness and addressing a person's negative face. These are divided into 5 different categories (Brown & Levinson 1987: 131): *be direct, don't make assumptions or presumptions about H's wants* e.g. by using hedging e.g. "If you'll allow me, I declare the meeting open" (Brown & Levinson 1987: 163); *do not coerce the hearer* e.g., by minimizing the imposition e.g. "I just want to ask you if you could lend me a tiny bit of paper" (Brown & Levinson 1987:177); *communicate his wants to not impinge on H*, e.g., by apologizing e.g. "I'm sure you must be very busy, but..." (Brown & Levinson 1987: 188); or *redress other wants of H* by going on record as incurring a debt e.g. "I'd be eternally grateful if you would..." (Brown & Levinson 1987: 210).

"The reasons for choosing to perform or not to perform an FTA are many. However, the underlying desire is to maintain a good relationship with your interlocutor" (Johansen 2008: 25) In order to choose the most appropriate strategy, we therefore need to calculate the seriousness or the *weightiness (W)* of an FTA. In doing this, we need to consider the *social distance (D)*, the *relative power (P)* and the *absolute ranking of the imposition (R)* (Brown & Levinson 1987). However, "these are not intended as *sociologists'* ratings of *actual* power, distance, etc., but only as *actors'* assumptions of such ratings, assumed to be mutually assumed, at least within limits" (Brown & Levinson 1987: 75-76).

Brown and Levinson constructed the following formula that is meant to help calculate the seriousness of an FTA:

$$W_x = D(S,H) + P(H,S) + R_x$$

W_x is the value that measures the seriousness of the FTA, $D(S,H)$ is the value that measures the relative social distance between the speaker and the hearer, $P(H,S)$ is the value that measures the power that the hearer has over the speaker, and R_x is the value that measures the

degree to which the FTA is rated an imposition in that culture (Brown & Levinson 1987). Based on the speaker's calculations, he chooses an appropriate strategy. The more serious the FTA is considered to be, the more polite the strategy has to be. The seriousness of an FTA might vary from culture to culture. "In Norway, [e.g.], it is completely acceptable to admit that you do not know anything about a certain subject. In Japan however, that would be seen as embarrassing and threatening to one's own face" (Gray 2005 in Johansen 2006: 24).

As mentioned in section 2, all members of a society are expected to be familiar with these face-saving strategies and to cooperate in protecting and maintaining each other's face. This expected willingness to cooperate with others in communication is partly derived from Grice's model of the *cooperative Principle* (Grice 1975). There is a "general idea that people involved in a conversation will cooperate with each other. (...). In most circumstances, the assumption of cooperation is so pervasive that it can be stated as a cooperative principle of conversation" (Yule 1996: 36-37). This principle was further subdivided into four *maxims*: quality, quantity, relation and manner. The maxims are not explicitly stated in conversation, just as the use of a face-saving strategy isn't explicitly stated by the speaker. All members of a society or a specific social group are still expected to adhere to these principles and avoid violating them if possible. However, it has been claimed that "whereas Grice was seeking a means to explain how individuals successfully convey their intentions without literally expressing them, the speaker in Brown and Levinson's theory seeks to obscure or hide those intentions" (Werkhofer 1992 in Watts 2003: 111), i.e. their communicative goals.

In order to illustrate how establishing and maintaining face as well as the use of face-saving strategies work, Brown and Levinson introduced the notion of a *model person* (MP). An MP is "a willful speaker of a natural language (...) who possesses two (...) fundamental abstract concepts: rationality and *face* (...)" (Brown 2006: 32). Face was thoroughly described in section 2, while rationality, in this context, refers to the ability to use the most appropriate strategies to reach one's communicative goals. MPs are highly skilled in applying the various face-saving strategies described previously in this section. They always recognize an FTA and know how to handle it in the best way possible. "Model persons, therefore, would be somewhat ideal individuals (...) who are error free, have a decent memory and know linguistic systems of their native language" (Kwon & Ha n.d.: 81).

All members of society are, in their own individual way, somewhat a realization of the MP. MPs do not belong to a specific culture or speak a specific language. The way he or she acts in various situations will therefore not be cross-culturally different (Kwon & Ha n.d.). The notion of MP most likely stems from the fact that Brown and Levinson claim their theory to be universal. Their essential idea is that “interactional systematics are based largely on universal principles. [However] (...) the application of the principles differs systematically across cultures, and within cultures across subcultures, categories and groups” (Brown & Levinson 1987: 283). Even though the manner in which MPs choose to apply the strategies and their choice of words and formulations are different from language to language, the use of these face-saving strategies are still universal and will therefore be observable in similar interaction situations and with similar frequency in all cultures worldwide.

4.0 Criticism

As mentioned, Brown and Levinson’s theory is frequently applied when discussing and analyzing politeness and polite speech acts in various cultures and in various languages. However, it is also frequently criticized. It is important to be aware of the main points of criticism and the theory’s shortcomings and consider these thoroughly before applying it in one’s own research.

Brown and Levinson claim their theory “to be applicable to all languages, and therefore much of the debate has been concerned with how universal it can really be, or whether Brown and Levinson failed to take certain kinds of cultures into account” (Brown 2006: 31) They aimed to account for the “extraordinary parallelism in the linguistic minutiae of the utterances with which persons choose to express themselves in quite unrelated languages” (Brown & Levinson 1987: 55) According to them, their framework can help reveal universal models of communication in human interaction and it can thus be applied when analyzing speech acts and politeness strategies in every language and in every culture. They based their claim of universality on findings from research done on three different languages: English, Tamil and Tzeltal (a Mayan language). Watts (2003), however, argues that a “claim for universality based on language data from just three languages is grossly overstated” (Watts 2003: 98).

In fact, several researchers (e.g. Gray (2005), Watts (2003), Eelen (2001)), claim that Brown and Levinson have failed in creating a universal politeness theory. It cannot account for how politeness and politeness strategies are applied in all cultures and in all languages.

In some cultures, speakers may not always have a choice when it comes to polite behavior. Sometimes, a speaker may choose to be polite to reach a certain goal, but in other situations the speaker may act politely due to social rule and in those cases is unable to make an independent choice (Grey 2005 in Johansen 2008: 29).

In some cultures, such as the Japanese, one can identify markers of politeness and social status even in situations without FTAs. Matsumoto claims “Brown and Levinson’s theory of politeness fails in Japanese not because the strategies for achieving politeness [necessarily] are different but because the postulated motivation underlying politeness phenomena seems unsuited to Japanese culture and language” (Matsumoto 1989: 38).

Moreover, Brown and Levinson’s notion of face and its universality is also widely debated and criticized. That is, the concept of a positive face appears to be generally accepted. It is the claimed existence of a person’s individualistic, *negative face* that causes trouble. By insisting on a universal notion of face, Brown and Levinson are accused of basing their theory on Euro-centric assumptions, thus neglecting important cultural values in other, non-European cultures. “Critics, not surprisingly, are mainly non-Anglophone researchers who find Brown and Levinson’s particular concept of ‘face’ difficult to apply in their own cultures and, consequently, have argued against the universality of their definition of ‘polite behaviour’ (Bargiela-Chiappini 2003: 1460)

Watts argues, “(...) it is unclear how negative face (...) should be understood in a ‘culture’ in which an individual’s freedom of action is taken to be that of the community as a whole” (Watts 2003: 105). Some cultures emphasize the importance of the social group and its interests, not the individual, his image of self and his own wants and wishes. The way an individual perceives himself is irrelevant. What matters is the group’s perception of him and his contribution in establishing a face for the group as a whole. The notion of face in Nigerian Igbo society, for example, is considered to be “egalitarian”, and in this notion the “concern for group interest rather than atomistic individualism is the expected norm of behavior” (Nwoye 1992 in Watts 2003: 103). A member of the Igbo tribe is always more concerned with the group and its reputation and face rather than his own, individual face. In this society,

one might therefore best talk of group face, and this notion can thus be viewed as a resemblance of the Chinese notion of face, as described by Hu (see section 2). Researchers have made “similar points in respect to the inappropriateness of a notion of negative face in Turkish (...) [and] Egyptian Arabic society” (Watts 2003: 103).

Even though I find these aspects of criticism important to consider, it is also interesting to note that none of Brown and Levinson’s critics, maybe with the exception of Watts (2003), presents a satisfactory alternative to Brown and Levinson’s theory and framework. Moreover, even though the claimed Eurocentric focus might be problematic for the study of speech acts in some non-European cultures, the focus of my study was to investigate how *Norwegian* students chose to express requests in *English*. Both Norwegian and English (British) cultures are European, and are often described as individualistic cultures, i.e. they focus on face of the individual rather than on group face. I therefore found it appropriate to apply Brown and Levinson’s theory in the analysis of the results of the DCT, despite these aspects of criticism.

However, the emphasis on the individual’s negative face wants in politeness is not only criticized in discussions related to the universality of the framework. Some researchers, e.g. Watts (2003) and Werkhofer (1992) argue that Brown and Levinson’s notion of face does not offer a realistic picture of politeness and polite behavior. According to the critics, the notion seems put too heavy an emphasis on the selfish desires of the individual and that the framework “seems to presuppose that an antagonism between [Speaker] and [Hearer] is necessary for politeness to take place” (Werkhofer 1992 in Brown 2006: 34). That is, politeness strategies are only applied when the face of one or both of the interlocutors is threatened. Even though Brown and Levinson’s theory is based on and shares several similarities with Goffman’s take on politeness, Watts argues that Brown and Levinson somewhat alienate their theory from that of Goffman and suggests a return to Goffman’s theory, especially in terms of his notion of face. Goffman argued that the central aspect of face is “not the individual and his psychology, but rather the syntactical relations among the acts of different persons mutually present to one another” (Goffman 1967: 2). The dominating focus in interaction should therefore be to establish and maintain good relations among members in a social group, not to pursue the wants of the individual. Moreover, Watts argues that

we must accept that we are attributed face socially in accordance with the line or lines we have adopted for the purposes of some communicative interaction. This means that we can be assigned different faces on different occasions of verbal interaction and that all social interaction is predicted on individuals' face needs (Vilki 2006: 328).

According to Watts we will renegotiate face in every communication situation that we participate in. He thus strongly disagrees with Brown and Levinson, who claim that an individual's face is an image that is constructed prior to interaction.

Some of this criticism might be justified. However, in my opinion, many critiques over-emphasize some of the aspects of Brown and Levinson's theory and take these out of context, while at the same time they neglect other important aspects in their argumentation. "Brown and Levinson (1987) actually argued for a shift in sociolinguistics from speaker-identity to dyadic patterns of verbal interaction in the expression of social relationships" (Brown 2006: 34). In other words they wanted a focus on both participants in a conversation, the wants of both speaker and hearer and the relationship between them. The way I see it, this is reflected in Brown and Levinson's theory. On the one hand, they focus on the individual and his face wants. On the other hand, they also emphasize cooperation between the interlocutors in order to maintain the face of both and the fact that both interlocutors need to be considerate of their partners face wants.

Moreover, I find Watts' claim that face is constantly renegotiable as well as related to different occasions of verbal interaction somewhat problematic. In Western cultures the freedom of the individual is highly valued. Every person is likely to have a fairly stable set of values and an image of self that he would like others to recognize. In interaction, he will try to communicate his values and beliefs to his interlocutors as well as expect their cooperation in trying to maintain his face and image of self. There will always be instances where a person has to pay more attention to the face of his interlocutors than his own face, e.g. in situations like the one described in section 4.2 of the article. Generally, however, I believe that face in Western cultures is far less renegotiable and apt for change than what Watts claims. Therefore, in my opinion, the negotiability of face might very well be culturally dependent and the validity of Watts's hypothesis should have been tested in a cross-cultural study. This view is supported by Vilki (2006), among others. On the other hand, I do not have any particular experience with non-Western or non-European cultures, so this is merely a hypothesis based on my personal background from a European culture.

It is not, however, only Brown and Levinson's notion of face and the claim for universality that are criticized. Their concept of face-saving strategies is not accepted by everyone either. Their take on politeness and social interaction is criticized for being overly pessimistic and rather paranoid (Schmidt 1980). It has been claimed that by building their theory of politeness on a list of strategies that speakers can apply when trying to minimize threats to face, Brown and Levinson see acting politely simply as an act of conflict avoidance.

If the Brown and Levinson account for politeness is accepted, then (...) social interaction becomes an activity of continuous mutual monitoring of potential threats to the faces of the interactants and of devising strategies of maintaining the interactants' faces – a view that if always true, could rob social interaction of all elements of pleasure" (Nwoye 1992 in Watts 2003: 100).

In other words, their theory of face-threatening acts seems to imply that polite speech acts will *only* be found in potentially face-threatening situations. Without a threat to face, speakers would not have a reason to be polite.

Even though there might be some truth to these claims, I find them slightly exaggerated and believe that it is important to consider *why* interlocutors find the need to be polite in the first place. In which situations do we generally utilize polite words, structures, and expressions? Does the need for politeness not originate in the wish to establish and maintain good relations with one's interlocutors? "The idea that politeness should be understood as strategic conflict-avoidance can be found, for example, in the view that the basic social role of politeness is in its ability to function as a way of controlling potential aggression between interactional parties" (Brown & Levinson 1987 in Vilkki 2006: 323). If threats to social relations did not exist and if speakers did not have to worry about hurting or offending their interlocutors in conversations, the need for politeness would, in my opinion, be non-existent.

Further criticism directed towards Brown and Levinson's theory is related to its seeming neglect of impoliteness. "The theory repeatedly refers to different forms of 'politeness', yet inherently takes this as a synonym to 'polite' rather than regarding it as a scale spanning both kinds of behavior. (...) By neglecting one end of the politeness scale it is arguable that the model is incomprehensive" (Gilks 2010: 96). It can be argued that a theory that claims to deal with politeness needs to present some thoughts related to the other side of the scale as well. However, the way I see it, to claim that impoliteness is neglected in Brown and Levinson's theory is not completely valid. By including the strategy of *doing the FTA without redressive*

action Brown and Levinson do consider impoliteness. An FTA is in its nature an impolite act. If a speaker does not try to minimize the potential damage of such an act, this can be interpreted as impoliteness. Moreover, one can question whether it would have been possible to include an elaborate focus on impoliteness in a theory that, to a large extent, is based on the notion of face. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), politeness serve to protect the face and the face wants of interlocutors in social interaction. This can only be done if speakers are considerate of their interlocutors' face wants. Ignoring these wants, or being impolite, would potentially ruin social relations and communication (Eelen 2001). Besides,

Brown and Levinson never claimed to devise a formula for impoliteness, but repeatedly and explicitly claimed to be looking at polite behavior. Their theory goes into such depth at one end of the politeness continuum that it is difficult to imagine a scale of a theory that would also accommodate the opposite end in equivalent detail. Therefore, although impoliteness is neglected, the model can still be considered (...) to go much further than to 'pretend' to say something valuable (Gilks 2010: 97).

Finally, Brown and Levinson and their theory have also been faced with criticism related to culture. It has been claimed that one major problem with their theory is the fact that it is assumed that "politeness resides within linguistic forms and that it is not a product of interaction within a particular community" (Johansen 2008: 31). According to Watts (2003), Brown and Levinson neglect the effect culture and context have on how an utterance is formulated and when and where a certain politeness strategy is applied. He also claims that Brown and Levinson see politeness as predetermined, decontextualized speech acts. A face-saving speech act is polite in its nature and is not affected by the various aspects of context and culture. From Watts' point of view, politeness "does not reside in a language or in the individual structures of a language" (Watts 2003: 98), but rather that participants in communication demonstrate politeness in all aspects of their behavior, not only by what they say. Politeness strategies are developed within each individual community and individuals adhere to these in order to claim their part as a member of that community. What speakers say and how they act will *always* mirror the social norms of the culture to which the interlocutors belong. Eelen agrees and argues that politeness should be considered a cultural phenomenon (2001 in Johansen 2008).

Several researchers have conducted studies that demonstrate how speech acts and speech patterns differ in different cultures. Tsuda (1992) studied compliment responses in American English and compared the speech patterns of Americans with those of the Japanese. She

found several differences in the way members of the different cultures chose to express compliments. Americans, for example, relied much more on their linguistic resources and explicitly stating their communicative intentions when complementing the hearer, than the Japanese did. Blum-Kulka et al. argue that “cross-cultural differences in expectations of linguistic behavior, interpretative strategies, and signaling devices can lead to breakdowns in interethnic communication” (1989:6), and cultural-specific linguistic and behavioral traits should therefore play a major role in politeness research.

To a large extent, I do agree with this line of criticism. Culture is and should be considered as an important aspect of politeness. I believe that the culture a person conforms to will affect the way that person talks and behaves in social settings. What is considered acceptable or unacceptable behavior will consequently be a result of the social norms in that culture. However, Brown and Levinson do to some extent acknowledge the affect of culture. They state that their theory is merely “the bare bones” (Brown & Levinson 1987: 13) of what is considered to be universal. They expect there to be “cultural specifications of many sorts – what kinds of acts threaten face, what sorts of persons have special rights to face-protection, and what kinds of personal style (...) are especially appreciated” (Brown & Levinson 1987: 13). Every culture and society is, in other words, expected to elaborate the details. On the other hand, Brown and Levinson do not offer a satisfying definition of how the term “culture” should be defined. The term is “used to apply to geographical entities (...), ethnic divisions (...), gender groups, languages, and social classes (...) By having such a diverse and never fully elucidated definition of culture, B&L make vague the boundaries of their framework” (Gilks 2010: 98). Which of these cultures are expected to make the elaborations? This is not explicitly stated in Brown and Levinson’s theory.

Researchers will most likely continue to debate and question this theory. Some will argue that we should abandon parts of the theory or the theory as a whole, while others will continue to use this theory in their research and preach its many advantages and praise its applicability. Either way, although many aspects of the theory have been criticized and

many questions have been asked of the model (...) the fact that such a substantial amount of research has been devoted to its discussion illustrates its influence and the influence it has had on sociolinguistics. (...). From its original formulation in 1978, the model is still in contention and use nearly thirty years later. This fact alone demonstrates its influence and the usefulness it has had in raising the issue of politeness and sparking further debate and research (Gilks 2010: 99).

Chapter 2:

Challenges to the development of pragmatic competence in the English language classroom

1.0 An additional source of input: interviews with high school teachers

In qualitative research, we seek “to understand, represent, or explain something, usually some fairly complex social phenomenon” (Pyett 2003, 1170). Moreover, an account can only be considered valid “if it represents accurately those features of the phenomena that it is intended to describe, explain or theorise” (Hammersley 1987 in Pyett 2003: 1170). The study presented in the article resulted in some highly interesting implications and hypotheses in relation to Norwegian EFL students and their level of pragmatic competence. However, interpretations and indications are based on data types that constitute a single case study. In addition, the data collected for the research presented in the article were collected from a rather small group of test takers. One might thus debate whether the findings and the interpretations of these can be considered valid and generalizable.

I have therefore chosen to take advantage of the benefits of a methodological triangulation and conduct a small, follow-up study in order to create an additional source of input. “The benefits of triangulation include (...) increasing confidence in research data, creating innovative ways of understanding a phenomenon, (...) and providing a clear understanding of the problem” (Thurmond 2001 in Guion et al. 2011: 2). In the discussion presented in this chapter, I will therefore also include the comments and perspectives of three high school teachers whom I have interviewed. These teachers offered their views on and interpretations of my findings, statements and hypotheses as well as shared their own reflections and experiences in terms of the level and quality of pragmatic competence among Norwegian students of English at the VG1 level. The input from these teachers will hopefully provide new perspectives on the topic of discussion as well as contribute to a validation and a more profound understanding of pragmatic competence and its role in the English language classroom in Norwegian schools. I also hope that this additional source of input can “provide

sufficient detail and context for the reader to assess [my] interpretation and [my] trustworthiness” (Pyett 2003, 1171) as a researcher.

2.0 Method

As a means of collecting information from high school teachers, I decided to utilize semistructured interviews, which is a “method of inquiry that combines a pre-determined set of open questions with the opportunity for the interviewer to explore particular themes or responses further” (Evaluation Toolbox 2010). Even though a semi-structured interview is an oral data collection method and might resemble a formal conversation, it is not considered to be a conversation between equals. The researcher defines and controls the situation, introduces the topics of discussion and critically interprets the answers produced by the informants (Kvale 1994).

In order to prepare for the interviews, I developed an interview guide (see Appendix 2). The guide contained a series of possible questions for the informants and the questions were divided into different categories. This was done in order to create a logical structure to the interview. However, when conducting the interviews, I adjusted these questions and the order in which they were asked to the answers the informants gave. When an informant touched upon an interesting topic that was not represented in the interview guide, a certain degree of improvisation was required to make sure that I would collect reliable and interesting data. Some informants also answered more than one question in the interview guide in one turn, which forced me to adjust the course of the interview accordingly.

The manner in which questions are formulated and presented to the informants will inevitably affect the quality as well as the reliability of the end result. A skilled researcher knows how to ask questions that are comprehensible and that will generate relevant and interesting information. By checking his or her interpretation of the informant’s statements and by asking follow-up questions, the researcher will also create a positive atmosphere and communicate to the informant that s/he is really listening to and taking interest in what the informant says (Kvale 1994). In my interview guide I included a variety of different types of questions. Some only required short, specific answers, while others demanded more extensive answers and reflections on the part of the informant. I focused my questions on the informant’s experience with and reflections on their students’ level regarding pragmatic

competence. I also talked them through my article and my findings. I wanted to discuss my theories and receive feedback from the informants.

Perhaps the most important issue when it comes to the formulation and presentation of interview questions, however, is the issue of leading questions. In some cases, especially when interviewing persons that are easily affected, the use of leading questions can eventually lead to a study that is invalid. On the other hand,

the qualitative research interview is well-suited when it comes to the use of leading questions as a means of controlling the reliability of the informant's answers as well as checking the researcher's understanding of those answers. (...) The question is therefore not whether to use leading questions or not, but rather where you want them to lead and (...) whether the questions can produce new, reliable and interesting information (Kvale 1994, 157-158 – my translation).

Thus, instead of weakening the quality and reliability of an interview, leading questions might instead prove to strengthen it.

According to Kvale (1994), a person can only become a skilled interviewer by conducting interviews. By studying literature and theory you can acquire some general guidelines that can be helpful, but you need to practice in order to develop good and effective interviewing techniques. Even though I am satisfied with the data collected in the interviews I conducted, I agree with Kvale in this respect. When studying the transcriptions of the interviews (see Appendices 3-5), there is a difference between the first and third interview in terms of my ability to ask good questions and follow up on interesting points in the informants' answers. This could have been avoided by organizing some practice runs or by recruiting one or two test informants. However, considering the amount of time available for and the purpose of this part of my research, I chose not to. One can, of course, debate whether this was a wise decision.

In qualitative research literature, the number of informants that should be recruited for the data collection process is under constant debate. Some argue that the more informants participating in process, the more reliable the findings will be. Others argue that the required number of informants depends on the purpose of the research (Kvale 1994). If the researcher sets out to test a hypothesis, the number of informants should be larger than if the purpose of the research is to collect knowledge of general attitudes regarding a specific topic. I chose to

recruit three informants. The data collected in these interviews were to serve as an elaboration on or an additional comment to the findings presented in the article. I was, in other words, trying to develop a more profound understanding of general attitudes among Norwegian high school teachers concerning the importance of students developing pragmatic competence as well as the general quality of pragmatic competence among Norwegian EFL students.

My informants were recruited by means of a convenience sample. During my time as a student at the University of Oslo and as a teacher in high school, I have met and cooperated with people from different backgrounds and with varying degrees and different kinds of experience. I therefore made use of my professional network when recruiting informants. In the discussion, I will refer to the informants by nicknames. This is to secure their anonymity as well as protect the identity of their students and employers. All three teachers have completed the course in practical pedagogical education (PPU). Theresa, the first informant, is 26 years old and has a master's degree in Spanish subject didactics. She has three years of working experience. In addition to English, she teaches Spanish. The second informant, Maria, is 32 years old. She has been teaching English and history at high school level for one year. She is also a master student, currently working on her thesis in English subject didactics. The last informant is Peter, and he is the most experienced of the three teachers. He is 49 years old, and has been teaching English for eight years, four of them in high school. He has majored in adaptive education and teaches Norwegian, German, and English. This is a small sample population, but for the purpose of acquiring knowledge of general attitudes regarding pragmatic competence among Norwegian high school teachers, I find the size of this sample to be satisfactory.

When conducting the interviews, I utilized a tape recorder instead of taking notes. This was done in order to facilitate the interpretation and analysis of the informants' answers. Before I started analyzing the data, I chose to transcribe each interview. A transcription of an interview is in reality a process of transforming an oral conversation into a decontextualized, written source of data (Kvale, 1994). The manner in which you choose to perform the transcription is related to the question of the data's validity. "The data must accurately reflect what the participant has said or done. The reporting of the data must also reflect the same accuracy, which means that the transcription is an accurate account of what is said" (Thomson 2011, 78). It is most likely impossible to identify one single, objective means of

transcription. Therefore, Kvale (1994) argues that a researcher should rather utilize a method of transcription that is linked to his or her research purpose. For this part of my research, it was the content of the informants' answers that was most significant. When transcribing, I therefore simply wrote down what was said during the interview, leaving out linguistic information about the informants' tone of voice, pauses, body language or facial expressions. Some might argue that this weakens the descriptive validity of the interview (Maxwell 1992). However, I chose this method of transcription in order to focus specifically on what was most important for my research as well as to make the transcription process as effective as possible.

The transcribed interviews formed the basis for my interpretation of the teachers' comments and reflections. The quality of an interpretation is, of course, related to the quality and trustworthiness of the researcher and his or her choice of method and skills in analyzing, interpreting, and reporting data. According to Kvale (1994), the qualitative semi-structured interview is often criticized for lacking objectivity, especially due to the fact that it is based on interpersonal interaction. "The common complaint from empiricists (...) is that it relies too heavily on the interpersonal involvement of the researcher and on what appear to be arbitrary interpretive judgments. In short, empiricists argue that human science research is not valid because it is not objective" (Salner 1989, 47). However, in qualitative research, one can claim that valid research is not necessarily the same as objective research. Pyett (2003) argues that one should accept that the researcher and his or her perspectives would inevitably influence the research process. "A researcher's theoretical position, interests, and political perspective will affect, if not determine, the research question, the methodological approach, and the analysis and interpretation of the data" (Hertz 1997 in Pyett 2003: 1172). The qualitative research interview might even be considered privileged in that it involves conversation and human interaction (Kvale 1994).

In sections 3 and 4, I will use the information gained from the interviews with the three high school teachers in order to create a link between theory and the real world and, by doing so, I will, hopefully, provide additional and interesting knowledge.

3.0 How important is pragmatic competence?

A Norwegian EFL student at the VG1 level is expected to develop skills in a variety of

different competences. All of these can, in some way or another, be linked to one or more of the four basic skills: to be able to express oneself in writing and orally, to be able to read, numeracy, and to be able to use digital tools (Utdanningsdirektoratet 2010: Basic Skills section). Pragmatic competence is integrated as a part of several of these basic skills, but perhaps most prominently in the one that focuses on a student's ability to express oneself in writing and orally (see section 2.1 of the article for more detail on the role of pragmatic competence in the subject curriculum).

The English Subject Curriculum is based on the notion of communicative competence, which was introduced by Hymes in 1972. He stated that this competence involves the ability to know "when to speak, when not (...), what to talk to about with whom, when, where, in what manner" (Hymes 1972 in Ślęzak-Świat 2008: 6). I argue that it would be impossible for a language user to be proficient in this competence without at least some basic knowledge of and skills in the use of pragmatic conventions in the L2. As stated in section 2 of the article, pragmatic competence involves, among other things, knowledge of what is culturally acceptable, thus touching upon central aspects of Hymes' definition of communicative competence.

Canale and Swain (1980) were the first that differentiated "the components of communicative competence into grammar, discourse, sociolinguistic and strategic ones" (Ślęzak-Świat 2008: 16). Pragmatic competence plays an important role in their framework as well, even though their definition of communicative competence is somewhat different from Hymes'. The presence of pragmatic competence is most obvious in the sociolinguistic and discourse components. The former refers to

the mastery of sociocultural rules of use and rules of discourse, which emphasize the appropriateness (of meaning and form) of producing and understanding utterances in different sociocultural contexts [while the latter is] described in terms of cohesion (grammatical links) and coherence (appropriate combinations of communicative functions) (Ślęzak-Świat 2008: 16).

However, one can also claim that some aspects of pragmatic competence are included in the strategic component as well. A language user should have a variety of possible strategies at hand in case of a communication breakdown. S/he should, in other words, be able to notice when communication has gone wrong and be able to correct his or her mistakes (Ślęzak-Świat 2008). Canale and Swain (1980) were the first to introduce strategic competence as part of their framework for communicative competence. However, "they neither define nor

describe the mechanisms according to which strategic competence operates” (Ślęzak-Świat 2008: 17).

Bachman (1990) introduced a new, alternative division regarding language competence with his framework of Communicative Language Ability, and distinguished between organizational competence and pragmatic competence. Both competences were further subdivided into various sub-competences. Here, pragmatic competence is emphasized as one of two major components of a person’s language competence. It was defined as “the relationships between utterances and the acts of functions that speakers (...) intend to perform through these utterances (...) and the characteristics of the context of language use that determine the appropriateness of utterances” (Bachman 1990: 89-90).

Bachman’s framework also included a strong focus on strategic competence, thus elaborating on the concept introduced by Canale and Swain (1980). Bachman attempted to demonstrate the dynamic relationship between competence and performance (Ślęzak-Świat 2008:). According to Bachman (1990), strategic competence is the most central aspect of successful communication. “It achieves its orchestrating role by carrying out a mediation role between meaning intentions (...) and underlying competences, background knowledge and context of situation” (Bachman 1990 in Ślęzak-Świat 2008: 26). Knowledge of how to successfully and appropriately convey a message, taking the interlocutor’s social role and the context in general into consideration, is an important part of a person’s pragmatic competence.

Bachman and Palmer further developed Bachman’s framework in 1996, and it was more complex and detailed than any of the frameworks discussed so far: it was meant to serve as a comprehensive and elaborate description of language proficiency (Chalhoub-Deville 1997 in Ślęzak-Świat 2008). According to this framework “many traits of language users, such as some general characteristics, their topical knowledge, affective schemata and language ability influence the communicative language ability. The crucial characteristic is their language ability (...)” (Bagarić & Djigunović 1997: 98). This ability consists of two main concepts, namely a person’s language knowledge and his or her strategic competence.

As in Bachman’s framework of 1990, language knowledge is subdivided into organizational knowledge and pragmatic knowledge. Pragmatic competence thus still plays a central role in terms of a person’s language knowledge. According to Bachman and Palmer (1996), pragmatic knowledge refers to a language user’s ability to communicate and interpret what

his or her interlocutor wishes to communicate. In this, they include knowledge of conventions dictating acceptable language use as well as knowledge of socio-linguistic conventions that determine what type of utterances is suitable in specific contexts (Bagarić & Djigunović 1997).

Bachman and Palmer also heavily emphasized the importance of strategic competence in language use. Here, it is defined as “a set of metacognitive components which enable language user involvement in goal setting, assessment of communicative sources, and planning” (Bagarić & Djigunović 1997: 99). Goal setting involves identifying the communicative task that is to be performed and choosing the appropriate strategy by which to perform this task. Assessment means that the speaker, when producing an utterance, draws on both his topical knowledge and background knowledge when interpreting the context and its demands. Planning involves the use of the speaker’s language knowledge, both organizational and pragmatic, when communicating his or her communicative intentions.

Strategic competence is the central element that underlies all forms of communication. In order to communicate successfully, a speaker needs to draw on all his or her knowledge. This knowledge involves, for example, previous knowledge of the target culture, knowledge of and experiences from the world in general, and knowledge of what is appropriate and acceptable in various kinds of situations. In some way or another, all of these components can be said to involve knowledge of pragmatic conventions.

In 2001, the Council of Europe introduced The Common European Framework of Reference (CEF), which was to serve as a common guideline for teaching, learning, and assessing all European languages. The English subject curriculum draws upon many of the central aspects of this framework. According to the Council of Europe, language use (...) comprises the actions performed by persons who as individuals and as social agents develop a range of competences, both in general and in particular communicative language competences. (The Council of Europe 2001: 9).

Communicative competence is, in other words, the underlying view of language on which the CEF is built. The framework considers communicative competence to consist of linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence. Sociolinguistic competence involves sensitivity to social conventions, and is therefore considered to affect all types of communication between people from different cultures (Council of Europe 2001). Pragmatic competence, on the other

hand, involves e.g. “the functional use of linguistic resources (production of language functions, speech acts), drawing on scenarios or scripts of interactional exchanges” (Council of Europe 2001: 13). Once again knowledge of pragmatics is heavily emphasized. However, it is the CEF’s definition of sociolinguistic competence that is closest to the working definition of pragmatic competence used for this study (see section 2 in the article). Pragmatic competence, as defined in the CEF, resembles more closely the definitions of strategic competence found in the frameworks of Canale and Swain, Bachman, and Bachman and Palmer.

3.1 Teacher comments on the importance of pragmatic competence

Given the degree to which pragmatic competence is emphasized both in the English subject curriculum as well as in the frameworks referred to in the previous section, one should assume that pragmatic competence plays an important role in English teaching in Norwegian schools as well. However, the findings presented in the article, implied that this is not the case. In fact, it was indicated that the development of pragmatic competence seems to be neglected by teachers in the English language classroom, and that focus was rather given to other components of the students’ language competence. This is in accordance with the research of Echeverria Castillo (2009). He claims that EFL teachers “often do not include this area of English because of a lack of time, knowledge or awareness of the importance of its use in daily life” (2009: 2).

In the interviews with the three informants, Theresa, Maria and Peter, I asked how they viewed the importance of pragmatic competence, both in isolation and when compared to other central competences. The feedback was both interesting and somewhat expected. All three informants felt that pragmatic competence has some importance. However, they also claimed that other parts of their students’ language competence were more important than pragmatic competence.

According to Maria, pragmatic competence is important, and it is essential when one wants to communicate with people from other cultures. On the other hand, students should possess skills in the most basic language functions before attempting to develop this competence. “You need some degree of grammatical competence and a basic understanding of the language in general in order to demonstrate [knowledge of pragmatic conventions in an L2]” (my translation). A focus on developing these basic skills therefore takes up a lot of time in her classes. As a teachers who teachers her students English only five hours a week, she

admits that she feels the pressure of having to cover all the aims of the subject curriculum and narrows her focus in terms of pragmatic competence down to only the basics, such as teaching the difference between the most common formal and informal expressions, and the difference between written and oral communication. She finds that expecting students to possess this kind of pragmatic knowledge is a realistic goal. Developing more advanced knowledge, however, is, at least for most students, unrealistic considering the small amount of time they have at hand.

Theresa said that while it was important for her students to have some basic knowledge of at least the most common informal and formal formulation both in writing and orally, she did not expect her students to be able to use this knowledge to any large degree. Moreover, she believed that her students focused more on other aspects of the English, such as learning to read and write, than on developing their pragmatic competence. “[Students] are expected to be able to read, write, and listen. Often developing these skills will be a priority” (my translation). However, she also emphasized that this was not necessarily the case for more proficient students. “For those students who wish to move on to higher education [after finishing high school] (...), I find [developing pragmatic competence] quite important (...). They would be expected to possess this knowledge at the university” (my translation).

Even though Peter can see the advantage of possessing knowledge of the pragmatic conventions of a language, he agrees with Theresa, and states that

to be honest, I believe that other skills come first. (...) The basic skills in English, mastering the language as it is – structure. (...) You need to master the language on a purely formal level, right? Then, when you have achieved this, you can move on to more complex, advanced aspects (my translation).

Moreover, Peter believes that to expect students to develop more than very basic knowledge of pragmatic competence, is an unrealistic goal. When using English, they need to keep in mind that there are some differences, such as between how we express things in writing and orally, and between how we formulate different speech acts in various cultures. On the other hand, Peter does not expect his students’ knowledge on this topic to be very profound or advanced. “They need to know some things, but the questions is how much can we really expect them to acquire?” (my translation).

In my opinion, these teacher comments reflect what I found in the research that was presented in the article; pragmatic competence is not necessarily a great priority in the

English language classroom and tends to be neglected in favour of some other aspect of language that is perceived to be more important, such as grammar, reading or writing. Even though these are all important skills to develop, the importance of pragmatic knowledge should not be undervalued. Echeverria Castillo (2009) states that

[although] elements such as fluency and accuracy are important for effective performance, learners (...) may encounter themselves in a difficult position when they have to interact with native speakers of English, because they have received extensive training in areas such as grammar, listening, and speaking, reading and writing, but not in the pragmatic elements that are a significant part of the language (2009: 1-2).

Thus, even with a high level of proficiency in the formal aspects of a language, language learners will face potentially serious communicative problems if pragmatic competence is neglected by teachers in the EFL classroom.

Moreover, as demonstrated in the discussion of relevant theory in section 3.0, some of the most dominating frameworks of language competence have, during recent years, come to focus more and more strongly on the role of pragmatic competence. Bachman (1990), Bachman and Palmer (1996) and the CEF (2001) all place pragmatic competence in a leading position as one of the most central components of a person's overall language competence. This focus is also found in the subject curriculum, which clearly expresses a desire for Norwegian EFL students to develop a profound understanding of pragmatics as well as the ability to apply this knowledge in real-life situations.

To succeed in a world where English is used for international interpersonal communication, it is necessary to master the English language. Thus we need to (...) [be able] to adapt our language to an ever increasing number of topics, areas of interest and communication situations. We must be able to distinguish between spoken and written styles and informal and formal styles. Moreover, when using the language in communication, we must also be able to take cultural norms and conventions into consideration (Udtanningsdirektoratet 2010: Objectives of the Subject section, para. 2).

In order to develop this level of competence, students clearly need more than a focus on “the basics” of pragmatics, such as identifying formal and informal expressions. To be able to express oneself in an error-free manner in terms of grammar and spelling is of no use if one does not know how to perform a speech act according to a language and culture's pragmatic norms and conventions. In this view, pragmatic competence “is not a piece of knowledge additional to the learners' existing grammatical knowledge, but it is an organic part of the learners' communicative competence” (Kasper 1997: 2). Teachers need to acknowledge this fact in order to work towards the goals set forth by the Norwegian educational authorities.

4.0 Challenges to the development of pragmatic competence

Based on the discussion in section 3, it is safe to say that to master the pragmatic aspects of a language is an important part of language acquisition in general. However, most Norwegian EFL students acquire English in the classroom. The findings presented in the article indicated that the students lacked a profound understanding of the more advanced features of pragmatic competence in English. They appeared to be quite proficient in terms of handling informal situations, whereas they fell short in more formally demanding situations. The findings also indicate that the students only possessed knowledge of one or two strategies and that they applied these in all situations, ignoring the various contextual demands and the social roles of their interlocutors. Given the complex nature of pragmatic competence, an important question to ask is therefore whether pragmatic competence can be taught. According to Kasper (1997),

[competence], whether linguistic or pragmatic, is not teachable. Competence is a type of knowledge that learners possess, develop, acquire, use or lose. The challenge for foreign (...) language teaching is whether we can arrange learning opportunities in such a way that they benefit from the development of pragmatic competence in L2 (1997: 1).

However, all three informants that participated in the data-collection process for this study expressed that they found it hard to know how to introduce and explain the more advanced, culture-specific aspects of pragmatic competence to their students. Theresa mentioned that many of her students had a limited vocabulary. She found them to be insecure in terms of how to express themselves in formal situations. "They often find it easier to formulate informal requests, where they can use lexical fillers or more common, familiar words, than to formulate formal requests. This demands more competence" (my translation). Does this mean that there exists a linguistic threshold level below which acquiring pragmatic competence is impossible?

Peter believed it to be almost impossible to bring the L2 culture into the classroom and to teach it in an accurate and comprehensible manner. He described the process of acquiring pragmatic knowledge as a process of "learning by doing".

To create good situations [for learning] ... that is difficult. (...) In order to increase one's understanding [of this phenomenon], you need to spend time in the target culture. (...) You can talk about this in the classroom, but it would not be perceived as real or important by the students (my translation).

Is it possible to create an increased cultural awareness among the students despite the limitations of classroom instruction?

The informants also called for more easily accessible resources to apply in the teaching of pragmatics. Peter, the most experienced teacher of the three, stated that “I have never seen a textbook for Norwegian EFL students that has a strong focus on pragmatic competence as you describe it” (my translation). If this is true, the content of textbooks used at the VG1 level is not in accordance with the goals of the subject curriculum. It is a given fact that textbooks should not be the only source of input in the classroom, they should work as comprehensible guides for both teachers and students. Moreover, to students they are “high prestige sources of input” (Bardovi-Harlig 1996: 24). How, then, does the quality of textbooks and other resources used in teaching affect the pragmatic development of students?

All questions mentioned so far in this section touch upon possible challenges related to the teaching of pragmatic competence. They will now be discussed, both by referring to relevant literature and by looking at the informants’ comments and reflections in more detail. This is not, however, an attempt to produce any clear-cut answers to these questions. The following discussion is only meant to emphasize the complexity of pragmatic competence as well as raising the readers’ awareness of the challenges that teachers have to deal with when wanting to introduce a focus on this competence in the classroom.

4.1 Is there a threshold level for pragmatic competence?

Research on second language acquisition shows that “grammatical competence often exceeds pragmatic competence” (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei 1998: 255). Moreover, it has been proven that a high level of L2 proficiency in terms of grammar and other formal aspects of language does not necessarily equal a high level of pragmatic competence (Kasper 1997, Bardovi-Harlig 1996) This indicates that EFL students need to acquire some level of formal competence before they can start developing their pragmatic knowledge, in other words there is some linguistic threshold level below which it is an impossible task to develop any real pragmatic competence.

This is in accordance with the experiences of the informants. They all argue that students need to acquire a certain amount of grammar and vocabulary before they can comprehend

and appreciate the teaching of pragmatics. Theresa believes that many of her students lack the necessary vocabulary to express themselves in a pragmatically correct manner. They tend to use easy, familiar vocabulary and lexical fillers when formulating utterances in English, irrespective of the formal demands of the context, and their language is highly informal. This was also the case for the students who participated in the study presented in the article. The majority tended to use a vocabulary that was clearly marked by informality. Moreover, most of the students overused common, informal requests. They therefore appeared to be unable to adapt their manner of expression to the situation and the formal demands of the context. Peter agrees with Theresa and claims that students must reach a certain level before a focus on pragmatic competence can be introduced. “This is not the first thing you will choose to focus on, right? First, you need to acquire a basic understanding [of the language]” (my translation).

According to Kasper (1997) “[fluent] and appropriate conversational responses require high degrees of processing control in utterance comprehension and production, and such complex skills may be very hard to develop through the few occasions for practicing that foreign language classroom learning provides” (1997:9). This might signify that five hours of English per week is just not enough to allow students to reach above the threshold level and a level of competence that enables them to appreciate the pragmatic aspect of the L2. Instead, the struggle to acquire a basic understanding of the language proves to be enough of a challenge considering the amount of time they have available.

Maria mentions that her students prefer to express themselves in Norwegian, even in English class. “My students rarely speak, and when they speak, they do so in Norwegian. They tend to avoid speaking English”. This resembles what Ellis (1997) refers to as the silent period. “Some L2 learners (...) undergo a silent period. That is, they make no attempt to say anything to begin with. Of course, they may [still] be learning a lot about language (...). The silent period may serve as a preparation for subsequent production” (1997: 20). This might indicate that Maria’s students are still at a beginner stage of language development and do not yet feel confident enough to attempt oral communication in the L2.

However, one might also claim that this reluctance to attempt to involve oneself in oral communication in the L2 indicates that the students seem to question their own competence and possibly feel some level of anxiety in relation to L2 language production. It has been

found that “one-third of students learning a foreign language experience some kind of anxiety”(Lucas et al. 2011: 99) Students that experience anxiety related to L2 acquisition usually identify speaking in the L2 as the situation that produces the strongest feeling of anxiety. “In this linguistic situation, the language learner is placed in a position of communicating something without sufficient command of the language to do this task” (Lucas et al. 2011: 99). Clearly, this language anxiety will affect a student’s L2 development, both in terms of formal and pragmatic competence.

Swain argues that comprehensible output plays a crucial role in L2 acquisition. “Output can serve as a consciousness-raising function by helping learners to notice gaps in their interlanguages. (...) [It might also help] learners to test hypotheses (...) and talk about their own output, identifying problems with it” (Ellis 1997: 49). Moreover, Atkinson, who focuses on the social dimension of language, argues that

language is learned in interaction (...) [and] that language acquisition must be seen in terms of “action” and “participation” allowing us to perform and participate in the world. We (...) learn by participating in specific and meaningful social activity, both formal and non-formal (Atkinson 2002 in Skjulestad 2012: 6).

In other words, learning how to communicate in an L2 demands practice, and without attempting to communicate, either due to a lack of confidence or anxiety, the students might find that their language development comes to a halt. This will result in a language competence that is incomplete. It is also doubtful whether students who experience these problems will manage to reach above the threshold level discussed above. Given the fact that language anxiety and a low self-esteem concerning communicating in the L2 seem to be quite common among students, it is also possible that the students who provided data for the study in the article have had similar experiences. This might therefore help explain why their language and vocabulary seemed so informal and limited.

With that being said, not all researchers agree that a threshold level for pragmatic competence really exists. In fact, it has been demonstrated “that pragmatic routines are teachable to beginning foreign language learners. (...) [Thus, this] dispels the myth that pragmatics can only be taught after students have developed a solid foundation in L2 grammar and vocabulary.” (Kasper 1997: 8). In this view, beginning L2 learners can start the process of developing pragmatic competence by learning formulations and routines without being able

to analyze and interpret them. This comes at a higher level of development. However, introducing such formulations and routines at an early stage of acquisition might help students “to cope with recurrent, standardized communicative events right from the beginning” (Kasper 1997: 9). Moreover, an early emphasis on the importance of pragmatic awareness in communication might motivate the students to pay more attention to this aspect of language during the whole language acquisition process. The study in the article seem to indicate that the student had in fact acquired the most common informal formulations and routines for requests in English, which indicates that the focus on these basics of pragmatics had received focus at lower levels of English acquisition. However, the findings also imply that there had been no focus on developing this knowledge further. Therefore, the students’ pragmatic development appeared to have come to a halt.

It can be claimed that “without a pragmatic focus, foreign language teaching raises students’ metalinguistic awareness, but it does not contribute much to develop their metapragmatic consciousness in L2” (Kasper 1997: 5). By focusing only on developing formal competence, students will in other words be able to introspect on their grammatical understanding, identify formal errors, etc. On the other hand, they will not develop the ability to reflect on their pragmatic understanding of the L2. To avoid this, students should be encouraged to think for themselves. In this way, they will hopefully develop the ability to analyze pragmatic aspects of the L2 (Bardovi-Harlig 1996). Therefore, teachers must work towards creating a safe environment for practicing using the L2. This will help “learners to expand their communication across cultural boundaries and to thereby participate in the very purpose of language, which is communication” (Bardovi-Harlig 1996: 30).

4.2 Pragmatic competence and culture

As discussed in section 2 of the article, pragmatic competence is inevitably linked to cultural knowledge. “[Language] cannot be dissociated from culture in the same way that form in language cannot be dissociated from meaning” (Aquino 2011: 150). Without knowledge of the target culture’s norms and conventions, a person will not be able to adapt his or her utterances according to the cultural framing. According to Yule (1996) we all develop what is referred to as “cultural schemata”. These schemata are based on “background knowledge structures (...) [and] will be culturally determined” (Yule 1996: 87).

Müller (1981 in Kasper 1997) presented a similar concept. He referred to what he called cultural isomorphism, “which is a interpretive strategy used to make sense of the world (...) [and] can be described as a “combination of assimilation and spot-the difference” (Kasper 1997: 13). We use our background knowledge and previous experience to classify new experiences as familiar or unfamiliar. According to both Yule and Müller, our interpretation of the world around us and the situations that we encounter are thus linked to our cultural background. If the L1 culture is different from the target culture, this might pose a challenge to the development of pragmatic competence in the L2. ”Language teaching therefore has the important task to help students situate L2 communicative practices in their sociocultural context and appreciate their meanings and functions within the L2 community” (Kasper 1997: 13)

4.2.1 Transfer of knowledge

As it was pointed out in the article, many students seemed to rely on their knowledge of the L1 when expressing themselves in the L2. Many of their requests were quite similar to the ones found in Norwegian. This transfer of knowledge can also be relevant in terms of students’ pragmatic and cultural knowledge. Students “have already been socialized into the schematic knowledge associated with their mother tongue” (Aquino 2011: 143). Both types of behavior, both verbal and non-verbal, can be considered as communication, and these “reflect our cultural background including our opinions towards gender, religion, sexual orientation, lifestyle, politics and even personal space” (Echeverria Castillo 2009: 18). However, it has been claimed that native speakers are only partially aware of the pragmatic competence that they bring to the table. Most of this knowledge is implicit. It is the basis on which all communication is built, but native speakers can rarely describe why they express themselves or behave in a certain manner (Kasper 1997).

An interesting question to reflect upon is what level of pragmatic competence the students possess in the L1 and whether this is transferrable to the L2. Maria mentioned that she reacted to the manner in which her students addressed each other, her fellow colleagues and herself. She refers to today’s educational institutions as “unhierarchical”. “When I was a student [in high school], we addressed the teacher as “Miss”. We never addressed her by name or by referring to her as “you” (...). We used her last name, “teacher” or “Miss”. Some of these boundaries have disappeared” (my translation). A similar tendency could be identified

among the students who participated in the study presented in the article. They seemed to struggle when it came to choosing the appropriate manner in which to address their interlocutors, especially in formal situations. Does this mean that the Norwegian students lack a sufficient understanding of pragmatic and politeness conventions in the L1 and that this hinders any development of this knowledge in the L2?

Kasper (1997) claims that adult non-native speakers can get some pragmatic knowledge of the L2 for free. “This is because some pragmatic knowledge is universal, and other aspects may be successfully transferred from the learners’ L1” (1997: 2-3). However, Maria mentioned that she believed that her students “lack the cultural understanding of the Norwegian culture, but they still have the vocabulary to express what they wish to express. (...) while in English they lack both the cultural understanding as well as the vocabulary” (my translation). If the students lack an understanding of which elements are culture-specific to their L1 and which elements are universal and therefore transferrable, this process of transferring knowledge will prove unsuccessful. Even those students who are sensitive to contextual demands and other pragmatic conventions in their L1, “might underdifferentiate such context variables as social distance and social power in L2” (Kasper 1997: 4).

Peter claims that only a few of his students possess pragmatic competence in English, and these are the same students that master this in Norwegian. “My experience dictates that (...) this is closely linked to a student’s personality (...) and social confidence” (my translation). He goes on by linking pragmatic development to the students’ ages and levels of maturity. “Students at that age tend to lack that focus or they do not consider their social roles or the social context in which they encounter themselves. At that age the most important thing is to be accepted by others (...). Everything else is of minor importance” (my translation). This might indicate that a person’s pragmatic competence, even in the L1, develops with age, and that some students, maybe even the majority, in Norwegian high schools are not mature enough, personally or socially, to grasp the complexity of this competence. Thus, this might also be a valid explanation for the seemingly incomplete, low-level pragmatic competence found among the students whose competence I investigated in the study in the article.

The way I see it, this is in accordance with Dewey, and his claim that “we don’t learn from experience. We learn from reflecting on experience” (1938 in Echeverria Castillo 2009: 21). When experiencing new things, both inside and outside the classroom, the students need to be

both willing and capable of reflecting on these experiences. In order to comprehend when a form of expression is appropriate and when not, a student needs to be able to analyze both the use and the effect of that expression. According to Bloom's taxonomy (Overbaugh & Schultz n.d.), to analyze and to evaluate are considered to be at an advanced level of intellectual behavior, and most likely demand a certain level of maturity. If there is some truth to the claim that Norwegian students are not at a level of maturity where they can comprehend and analyze the complex nature of pragmatic competence, neither in the L1 nor in the L2, one can question whether the goals found in the subject curriculum are realistic for students at the VG1 level in Norwegian schools.

4.2.2 Cultural identification

Another important aspect that will influence students' ability to develop pragmatic competence is whether they manage to identify with the target culture. Schmidt (1993) observed that "those who are concerned with establishing relationships with the target language speakers are more likely to pay close attention to the pragmatic aspects of input and to struggle to understand than those who are not so motivated" (1993 in Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei 1998: 253). If the target culture appears to be uncomprehensible and distant, students might lose interest in trying to understand it, and, as a result, lose interest in trying to master all aspects of the L2. To avoid this, EFL teachers therefore must strive to make the target culture seem vivid, interesting, and reachable.

The informants identified this as a difficult and challenging task. Theresa mentioned that she was unsure of how to bring the L2 culture into the classroom and introduce it to her students. "I don't think it would be very useful for the students to just read about it in some book" (my translation). Peter and Theresa believe that students need to experience the target culture for themselves. According to Peter, in order for his students to develop any real understanding of the L2 culture, the students "need to observe that culture firsthand. (...) Talking about it is one thing, but it wouldn't seem real to the students, I think" (my translation). Based on both of these teacher comments as well as the findings presented in the article, it can be claimed that the problem with creating an engaging and comprehensible presentation of the L2 culture is a problem that many EFL teachers find difficult, maybe even impossible, to solve. One can also question whether this is possible to achieve within the walls of a classroom. However,

few Norwegian schools have the necessary financial means to send students abroad to visit the L2 culture.

It has been claimed that L2 acquisition is the result of long-term convergence, or “when the social conditions are such that the learners are motivated to converge on native-speaker norms” (Ellis 1997: 39). This claim is based on Howard Giles’ accommodation theory (see e.g. Giles et al. 1991). According to this theory, the social group to which the learner belongs, will inevitably influence the L2 acquisition process. “When people interact with each other they will either try to make their speech similar to that of their addressee in order to emphasize cohesiveness (...) or to make it different in order to emphasize their social distinctiveness” (Ellis 1997: 39). The question then becomes: with what social group does Norwegian EFL students identify themselves and how does this identification process affect their motivation for developing pragmatic knowledge?

Peter believes that “in terms of acquiring cultural knowledge, films and the media clearly play the most important role [for Norwegian teenagers]. (...). In the classroom English tends to become something “dead”, something theoretical and distant (...) While what they watch in films and on TV is what becomes real” (my translation). This might indicate that the students mostly identify themselves with the culture they encounter on TV, which is likely to be engaging, familiar and easy to comprehend. The fact that Norwegian EFL students have easy access to L2 input outside the classroom can be considered a huge advantage, since the lack of comprehensible input “may lead to a pragmatic competence that is limited to what can be taught in the classroom” (Echeverría Castillo 2009: 4). However, if students lack the ability and skills needed to reflect on the content of this input, they are not likely to comprehend it. Besides, the language used, e.g., in traditional sitcoms, is often informal and filled with slang, and abbreviations. If students are not able to combine this knowledge with the information they are presented with in school, their pragmatic development will suffer. The fact that students identify themselves with the informal social context most commonly found on TV and in films might also help explain why the strategies applied by the students in the study presented in the article were so informal. For some students, the language they encounter in these TV shows appears relevant and important, while the language in class is decontextualized and irrelevant.

4.3 Pragmatic competence and resources

In the conclusion of the article, I called for, among other things, an investigation of the quality of the textbooks used in EFL instruction in Norwegian schools today. It is a fact that having access to good and reliable resources is an absolute necessity for high-quality teaching. For many teachers, the traditional textbook is the most important guide that dictates how they structure and focus their teaching. In addition, a textbook is usually meant to offer one out of several possible ways of reaching important goals set by the subject curriculum. However, “it's important to remember that a textbook is just one tool (...). Sometimes, teachers over-rely on textbooks and don't consider other aids or other materials for the classroom (TeacherVision 2013: Use Textbooks Wisely-section). One single textbook will not provide teachers with all the information they need in order to cover all the goals and competences represented in the subject curriculum, and many teachers spend a lot of time developing their own resources or searching for additional sources of input.

Either way “(...) textbooks do play an important role in providing input and moreover, they are easily accessible, widely available and (...) to the learners, they are high prestige sources of input”(Bardovi-Harlig 1996: 24). For teachers trying to develop pragmatic and cultural awareness among their students, it can therefore be important to investigate the usefulness of the traditional textbook in terms of guiding the teaching of pragmatic competence. Given the fact that the English subject curriculum for Norwegian schools is based on the notion of communicative competence and that pragmatic knowledge is a central aspect of this competence, one should expect that textbooks used in Norwegian high schools today offer at least a clear, comprehensible introduction to this aspect of language. However, the information gained from the interview process contradicts this assumption.

Peter states that he has never seen a clear focus on pragmatic competence in the textbooks he has used in his teaching. “There are short stories by Hemingway and factual texts about various English-speaking countries, some information about the political system and native inhabitants (...), but nothing on this competence. (...) it is not a priority in these books” (my translation). He also confesses that he feels insecure in terms of how to handle pragmatic competence and that the textbook does not offer any help in developing good and engaging lesson plans for his teaching. Without access to helpful resources, “the teacher has to do everything himself, and the result would most likely be of varying quality” (my translation).

Theresa describes similar experiences, and says, “the textbook does have a small amount of information about the difference between informal and formal styles, but there is far from enough information. At least, it is not very comprehensible” (my translation). Maria agrees, and refers to the focus on pragmatic competence in the textbooks she uses in her English classes as “superficial”.

Bardovi-Harlig (1996) claims that the situation, as described by the three informants, is quite common. Many textbooks, “even the new ones, are found lacking in at least two ways. First, it is often the case that a particular speech act (...) is not represented at all. Evidence is lacking. (...) Next, other speech acts are poorly represented, that is, they are not realistic” (1996: 24). If the situations presented in the textbooks are not perceived as real or relevant for the students, they are not likely to spend time trying to interpret and understand them. “Taking into account traditional (...) teaching materials (...), it is possible to say that (...) these resources even prevent students from acquiring pragmatic features of a new culture and language” (Aquino 2011: 151). Students need to encounter language that they can see themselves using outside the classroom. Teachers should therefore strive to find or develop teaching material that presents authentic language and relevant input. This input can trigger the learners’ motivation for acquiring more (Bardovi-Harlig 1996). If the quality of textbooks described by the informants is a representation of the average textbook used in Norwegian schools today, it is clear that they do not live up to the standards and goals found in the subject curriculum, and the textbooks thus need to be revised.

5.0 Summing up: is developing advanced pragmatic competence a realistic goal for Norwegian EFL students?

The discussion in sections 3-4 have demonstrated that pragmatic competence is indeed a complex language phenomenon. There are a lot of possible challenges that have to be overcome in order to achieve good, engaging and comprehensible teaching that can be beneficial to students. Some of the challenges that need to be considered in this respect might be the possible existence of a linguistic threshold level for pragmatic competence, L1 influence on the acquisition process, cultural identification problems, and available resources for the teaching of pragmatics. There are likely to be several other challenges in need of discussion as well, but are not included in this chapter’s discussion. I chose to focus on those aspects that were most prominently represented in the article as well as in the interviews with

the informants. However, both the challenges discussed above in the previous section and additional challenges could be interesting and relevant topics for further research projects.

The most important piece of information that the interviews provided was, in my opinion, the obvious insecurity related to the teaching of pragmatics among the teacher informants. Both the students' level of proficiency in general, the amount of time available for teaching and the quality of textbooks, among other things, contribute to this insecurity. Based on these findings, it is tempting to ask whether the goals set forth by the Norwegian educational authorities in terms of pragmatic competence are realistic for EFL students at the VG1 level.

The goals found in the subject curriculum that are most clearly related to this competence, are for example that the students should be able "to adapt [their] language to an ever increasing number of topics, areas of interest and communication situations (...) [and to] be able to take cultural norms and conventions into consideration" (Utdanningsdirektoratet 2010: the Objectives of the Subject - section) when communicating in English. Moreover, students should also be able to adapt "the language to the recipient and the situation, including distinguishing between formal and informal, written and spoken registers" (Utdanningsdirektoratet 2010: Main Subject Areas - section) as well as know how to "express him/herself in writing and orally in a varied, differentiated and precise manner, with good progression and coherence" (Utdanningsdirektoratet 2010: Competence Aims After VG1/2 – section). Can we really expect the students to develop a pragmatic competence of such a high level? Or is the level of competence described in the subject curriculum too ambitious to be realistic?

The CEF, which greatly inspired the educational authorities when developing the LK06, advocates the importance of the concept of plurilingualism.

[The] plurilingual approach emphasises the fact that as an individual person's experience of language in its cultural contexts expands (...) he or she does not keep these languages and cultures in strictly separated mental compartments, but rather builds up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact (Council of Europe 2001: 4)

Instead of focusing on multilingualism and using the native speaker as a model against which non-native speaker learners are judged, the CEF argues that the goal for language teaching and acquisition should rather be to help students develop their own linguistic identity. The

central aim is to make students able to participate in communication in a range of foreign languages, not to make them expert users of one or two languages. “From this perspective,(...) the (...) responsibilities of educational authorities, qualifying examining bodies and teachers cannot simply be confined to the attainment of a given level of proficiency in a particular language at a particular moment in time” (Council of Europe 2001: 5).

In this view, one can argue that the students’ focus should be on developing effective communication skills, not strictly on the formal aspects of language. Pragmatic competence is an important part of effective communication. However, in terms of plurilingualism, keeping the limitations of classroom instruction in mind, one can question whether the goal for the students should be to become highly skilled in mastering the pragmatic aspects of the L2 or whether they should just have some basic knowledge of pragmatics in several languages that might serve as a guide for them when communicating in a foreign language.

Echeverria Castillo (2009) stated that today English is spoken by “more non-native speakers than native speakers (...). As the use of English expands in number of speakers, it becomes a common link of (...) language learners who do not share a language or a culture” (2009: 4). In fact, Norwegian EFL students might use English to communicate with people from countries where English is not the mother tongue. Should the focus in teaching then be on developing a high level pragmatic competence in English, or on a good understanding of culture and the effect it has on communication in general?

In terms of language acquisition, it is quite common to distinguish between receptive and productive knowledge. The former refers to the “ability to understand meaning as intended in sociocultural context [while the latter ability refers] to vary one’s language use appropriately as intended according to the context” (Ishihara 2006: 4). Based on the discussion in sections 3-4, as well as the findings presented in the article, one might argue that a more realistic goal for Norwegian EFL students would be to first and foremost develop receptive knowledge of the pragmatic aspect of the English language. Considering the limitations of classroom instruction and the challenges that would have to be overcome in order to create learning opportunities that might result in productive knowledge, I find this goal to be more adapted to the students’ level of language competence in general. However, the sample populations that provided data both for the study presented in the article and for the discussion in sections 3-4 are rather small. Therefore, the implications and hypotheses

presented in this thesis might benefit from a more extensive validation study. Moreover, the questions of reflection asked in this section, might also prove to be relevant topics for further research.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire

1. Which Junior High School did you go to?

2. Have you ever spent time in an English speaking country?

Yes ☐

No ☐

2.1 If yes: when and for how long?

3. How often do you read English literature/magazines for pleasure?

Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Less than once a month	Never

4. How often do you watch English TV series?

Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Less than once a month	Never

5. How often do you watch English films?

Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Less than once a month	Never

6. How often do you speak English?

Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Less than once a month	Never

7. How often to you write in English?

Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Less than once a month	Never

Questions 8-11 contain four different case examples (situasjonsbeskrivelser). Consider each of the four examples and answer the questions for each case.

8. (Situation 1)

Peter is a Norwegian tourist who has just arrived in London. He has no idea where in London he is, where his hotel is located or how to find it.

He decides to ask a shopkeeper in a nearby kiosk for help.

Write down what Peter says to the shopkeeper and explain why you chose to have him say it like this. Please write your answers in English.

9. (Situation 2)

In class your teacher asks you to take notes. You realize that you have forgotten both pen and paper. The person sitting next to you, James, is an exchange student from London. You decide to ask him if he can lend you pen and paper.

How would you formulate this question and why did you choose to say it like this? Please answer in English.

10. (Situation 3)

You are spending your summer holiday in Manchester at an English language course. At the moment you are at the mall with your best friend in Manchester, Cathrine. You have just tried on a pair of pants that you really want, but unfortunately you don't have the money to buy them yourself. You decide to ask Cathrine if she can lend you the money.

How would you formulate this question and did you choose to say it like this? Please answer in English.

11. (Situation 4)

Mary, who lives in Liverpool, has worked in a company there for several years. Her employer has, on various occasions, expressed that he is very satisfied with the job that she does. Mary's salary, however, has stayed the same through all these years, and she has now decided to ask her boss for a pay raise.

Write down what Mary says to her boss and explain why you chose to say it like this. *Please write your answers in English.*

Appendix 2: Interview Guide

Introduksjon:

Tid: ca. 45 minutt

Jeg vil begynne med å takke for at intervjuobjektet stiller opp. Jeg vil også kort presentere meg selv, min bakgrunn, samt understreke følgende:

Informasjonen fra dette intervjuet skal brukes i forbindelse med skriving av masteroppgave. Identiteten til intervjuobjekter vil være konfidensielt. Alle navn som senere vil bli brukt i oppgaven vil være kallenavn som ikke ligner intervjuobjektens virkelige navn.

Videre vil jeg forklare kort hva prosjektet mitt går ut på, og hvor deres bidrag kommer inn.

- *Artikkel hvor nivået på norske elevers pragmatiske kompetanse i engelsk på VG1 nivå undersøkes.*
- *Ønsker tilbakemelding fra andre lærere i forbindelse med funnene mine. Kjenner de seg igjen i beskrivelsene/tolkningene/teoriene jeg kommer med, eller er de uenige på et eller flere punkter?*

NB! Forhøre meg om intervjuobjektet er komfortabel med at jeg tar opp det som blir sagt.

Del 1: Generell informasjon

Her ønsker jeg å stille noen få spørsmål for å vite mer om intervjuobjektet og dets bakgrunn.

Kvinne: _____

Mann: _____

Alder: _____

Arbeidssted: _____

Utdanning/arbeidstittel: _____

Fullført PPU? _____

Antall år som lærer _____

Hvilke fag/nivåer underviser du i/på i år? _____

Del 2: Innledende spørsmål om pragmatisk kompetanse

I denne delen av intervjuet ønsker jeg å kartlegge intervjuobjektets kunnskap om og erfaringer med pragmatisk kompetanse generelt. Er denne kompetansen, dens rolle i læreplanen etc. kjent?

Mulige spørsmål:

- I K06 står det blant annet at elevene må kunne «å kunne tilpasse språket til et stadig voksende antall emner og kommunikasjonssituasjoner. [De] må kunne skille mellom muntlig og skriftlig språkføring og formell og uformell språkbruk. Videre må [De] kunne ta hensyn til kulturelle omgangsformer og høflighetskonvensjoner når [de] bruker språket. ...». **Hvordan tolker du dette?**
- Etter din mening: hvor viktig er det at elever utvikler denne kompetansen på engelsk?
- Hvor viktig mener du denne kompetansen er i forhold til andre kompetanser i engelskfaget?
- Kan du si meg noe om hva du legger i uttrykket *Pragmatisk Kompetanse*?
- Kan du fortelle litt om dine erfaringer når det gjelder nivået på elevers pragmatiske kompetanse på engelsk?
- I beskrivelsen av kompetansemålene for etter fullført VG1-nivå i engelsk, står det blant annet at elevene skal kunne å «*velge og bruke egnede skrive- og talestrategier tilpasset formål, situasjon og sjanger*» og «*beskrive og vurdere effekten av ulike språklige uttrykksmåter*». **Opplever du dette som realistiske mål for norske elever i engelsk på VG1-nivå? Begrunn.**

Del 3: reaksjoner på funn i artikkelen

I denne delen av intervjuet vil jeg trekke fram ulike deler av artikkelen min og teste hvordan intervjuobjektet reagerer på de ulike påstandene/funnene jeg kommer med. Jeg vil innlede med å gi en nærmere beskrivelse av prosjektet som dannet grunnlaget for artikkelen min, samt oppsummere de viktigste funnene mine.

- Hva er det første som slår deg når du hører om funnene mine og mine påstander rundt disse?
- I undersøkelsen min måtte elevene forholde seg til både relativt uformelle situasjoner og mer formelle situasjoner. Analysen av elevenes svar indikerte blant annet at:

I uformelle situasjoner klarer flertallet av elever å kommunisere godt, mens de blir svært usikre i formelle situasjoner og vet ikke hvordan de skal formulere seg eller oppføre seg.

- Gir beskrivelsen assosiasjoner til egne erfaringer?
 - Kjenner du deg igjen i beskrivelsen?
 - Hvilke erfaringer har du gjort deg med dine elever i denne forbindelse?
 - Hva tror du grunnen kan være for at elevene i undersøkelsen taklet uformelle situasjoner bedre enn formelle situasjoner?
- I artikkelen påstår jeg videre at

Elevene bruker uformelle tale- og høflighetsstrategier uansett situasjon

De klarer ikke å tilpasse høflighetsstrategi/valg av formulering til situasjonen/mottaker

- Hvordan tolker du disse påstandene?
 - Kjenner du deg igjen i beskrivelsene?
 - Hva er dine erfaringer i forbindelse med dette?
- Funnene mine kan tyde på at elever kun bruker en eller to strategier/formuleringer når de skal produsere forespørsler på engelsk. Det virker også som om de i stor grad benytter seg av strategier/formuleringer som er inspirert av morsmålet sitt. I artikkelen påstår jeg at dette kan komme av at visse fraser og høflighetsstrategier kan være enklere å eksemplifisere og undervise enn andre, mer kompliserte formuleringer og strategier. Når jeg sier 'uttrykk som er enklere å undervise', tenker jeg for eksempel på standardfraser som 'could you', 'would you', 'may I', og lignende formuleringer.
- Hvordan forholder du deg til disse påstandene?
 - Hva er din erfaring i forbindelse med dette?
 - Kan denne beskrivelsen brukes til å beskrive dine elevers kompetanse?
 - På hvilken måte?

- I artikkelen påstår jeg at elevenes manglende kompetanse kan være et resultat av at pragmatisk kompetanse blir «glemt» i klasseromsundervisningen. Jeg påstår at elever mest sannsynlig ikke klarer å utvikle denne kompetansen på egenhånd. Jeg påstår også at 'pragmatisk kompetanse' muligens også kan være noe vagt og uhåndterlig for lærere også, og at noen kanskje derfor finner det vanskelig å veilede/hjelpe elevene i sin pragmatiske utvikling.
- Hvordan reagerer du på denne påstanden?
- Kan du tenke på andre aspekter som kan bidra til at denne kompetansen ikke blir prioritert i engelsk undervisningen?
- Føler du at du har fått/får den veiledningen du trenger for å kunne hjelpe dine elever med å utvikle pragmatisk kompetanse?
- Mot slutten av artikkelen, reflekterer jeg over hva som kan påvirke elevers utvikling av pragmatisk kompetanse. Her nevner jeg for eksempel læreren, lærebøker, andre læremidler (som lydopptak, film, transkriberinger av autentisk tale), og lærerutdanningen.
- Kan du fortelle litt om dine tanker rundt dette?
- Hvem eller hva mener du spiller den viktigste rollen når det gjelder utviklingen av elevers pragmatiske kompetanse.
- På hvilken måte kan vi forsterke dettes/dennes rolle i elevenes utvikling av pragmatisk kompetanse?

Del 4: Holdninger til og praksis i forbindelse med pragmatisk kompetanse

I denne delen vil jeg gå mer i detalj når det gjelder intervjuobjektets og dets erfaring/holdning til pragmatisk kompetanse og dets betydning i engelskfaget.

- Under PPU, fokuserte dine forelesere/seminarledere på å gi studentene råd/veiledning i forbindelse med undervisning av denne kompetansen?
- Fokuserer du eksplisitt på denne kompetansen i din undervisning?
- Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?
- Har du noen tanker om hvordan en lærer kan inkludere denne kompetansen i sin undervisning?
- Hvilket læreverk i engelsk benytter din arbeidsgiver seg av?
- Hvordan vil du beskrive den generelle nytteverdien av dette læreverket?
- Etter din mening, gir dette læreverket deg god hjelp og veiledning når det gjelder undervisning i pragmatisk kompetanse?

Avslutning:

Jeg takker for hjelpen og informasjonen gitt under intervjuet. Jeg forklarer kort hvordan jeg vil bruke informasjonen videre.

Appendix 3: Transcription of interview 1 - Theresa

November 2, 2012

Nickname: Theresa

Sex: Female

Age: 26

Education/employment: High school teacher in English and Spanish ("Lektor" with a master's degree in Spanish)

PPU: completed

Number of years working as a teacher: 3

	Int. forklarer bakgrunnen for undersøkelsen
Int.	Da har du lest et utdrag fra læreplanen I engelsk – formålet med faget – der du har lest om hvordan eleven må lære å skille mellom formell og uformell språkføring og formell og uformell språkbruk, osv. Det første jeg da lurer på er hvordan du tolker dette sitatet?
Theresa	Jeg tenker i alle fall at det er viktig at de vet forskjellene mellom ulike stilarter. At det kan være muntlig og at det kan være formelt, og hva som er forskjellen på det - både i muntlig og skriftlig tale og skriftspråk, da. Men det som står videre om kulturelle normer og høflighetskonvensjoner, da tenker jeg sånn at dette er noe vi kan undervise i, men at de kanskje ikke nødvendigvis er nødt til å bruke det i praksis hele tiden. Det er i alle fall det første jeg tenker.
Int.	Men hvis dette skulle vært en kompetanse – hvis vi tenker at dette sitatet er en beskrivelse av en kompetanse. Hva tror du ville vært inkludert i denne kompetansen?
Theresa	For eksempel at de må kunne skrive tekster som viser at de behersker det skriftlige, eller det uformelle og formelle språket. Eller at de skal kunne ha ulike muntlige presentasjoner eller framføringer eller samtaler hvor de også viser den forskjellen. Og kanskje også det å kunne peke på ulikheter og forskjeller da, i stilartene.
Int.	Mhm. Men hvor viktig synes du da at den biten av engelskkompetansen er, sammenlignet med andre kompetanser. Det er jo krav om at de skal lære seg å skrive grammatisk riktig, lese, forstå...
Theresa	Jeg tror nok kanskje det at dette her er mindre viktig for enkelte elever, mens for andre, de elevene som har lyst til å studere videre, f.eks. på studiespesialiserende og allmennfag, så synes jeg det er ganske viktig – at de er fult klar over det. Det vil jo være andre forventninger til de når du skal studere videre, kanskje de skal studere videre også.
Int.	Hvorfor tenker du at det er mindre viktig for andre elever? Hva er motivasjonen deres da?
Theresa	Kanskje det blir for mange elementer å tenke på, at de trenger å fokusere på å bygge opp setninger i stedet for å tenke at det skal være en høflighetskonvensjon inni der i tillegg. Men de må selvsagt klare å skille på det. For eksempel 'nå skal vi

	skrive en stil og i den stilen skal du ikke skrive som om du skriver brev til en venn.'
Int.	Nå er det sitatet du leste helt i starten... jeg har brukt det i min definisjon av det jeg kaller pragmatisk kompetanse. Har du hørt det uttrykket før?
Theresa	Ja...
Int.	Hva legger du i det uttrykket?
Theresa	Jeg legger vel kanskje ikke så mye i det... Men... det går jo på forståelsen og det å kunne bruk et språk, rett og slett. At du vil henvende deg til noen i butikken på en helt annen måte om du skulle spurt om du skulle henvende deg til en venn eller en venninne eller noe sånt noe. Så, det gjelder kanskje det å forstå ulike konvensjoner, rett og slett.
Int.	Nå har jo du undervist i snart tre år. Har du noen erfaring når det gjelder elevenes nivå innen denne kompetansen?
Theresa	Ja, jeg synes i alle fall at i VG1 engelsk, så er elevene i den første stilen... de synes det er kjempevanskelig å skille mellom sammentrukne former og sånne ting. Det kan fort bli veldig uformelt da, det blir mye synsing og subjektive meninger. Men så fort vi har gått gjennom det, så blir de ganske klar over det og mange prøver jo hele tiden å benytte seg av 'hele former' og vil vise at dette er mer objektive argumenter og sånne ting da.
Int.	Hva med det muntlige?
Theresa	Muntlig så tror jeg de er mye flinkere muntlig når det gjelder å henvende seg til publikum, egentlig. Men på den ander siden, så er det noen som for eksempel synes at det er veldig viktig å ha en PowerPoint da, og så står det om den kalde krigen og så står det sammentrukne former på den PowerPointen, eller at det er forkortelser eller at det er veldig uformelt, da blir jo det feil også.
Int.	Da skal du få et sitat til. Dette er fra kompetansemålene for VG1 engelsk.
	leser
Int.	Dette sitatet beskriver to viktige deler av den kompetansen elever på VGS skal utvikle. De skal kunne tilpasse skrive- og talestrategi til mottaker, situasjon og formål, og de skal kunne vurdere hvilken effekt ulike språklige uttryksmåter har. Opplever du dette som et realistisk mål å ha for elever på dette nivået?
Theresa	Jeg tror egentlig det. Jeg synes kanskje at, i alle fall sånn som jeg har sett på eksamen de siste årene, så har det vært fryktelig mye det med at du skal vurdere effekten av ulike språklige uttryksmåter. Jeg synes kanskje det har blitt litt vel overproporsjonert i forhold til det det skulle vært, i forhold til andre ting som det også er like viktig å få testa. At det kanskje går på dette for at det blir soppas generelt da, i forhold til når man går mer på helt spesifikke kunnskaper, tema kunnskaper for eksempel. Når det gjelder det å bruke skrive- og talestrategier, så tror jeg nok kanskje at det må være en start at de skal lære seg å bruke det. Mange kommer uten kompetanse i det i det hele tatt, mens andre er jo faktisk ganske flinke. Det har mye å si hvilken bakgrunn de har, tror jeg. For noen er det nok ganske vanskelig.
Int.	Så det er realistisk for de som har, for de som er på et ganske høyt nivå for de som er på et ganske høyt nivå i engelsk når de starter på VGS, men ikke for de som ligger litt etter?
Theresa	Jeg vet ikke helt... jeg mener, alle burde jo være kjent med det i løpet av det året, men det vil være forskjellig hvor godt de klarer å bruke de strategiene da. For en elev som gang på gang viser høy kompetanse i et fag, vil jo selvfølgelig ta med mye av det her, det er jo derfor den kanskje viser god kompetanse og kanskje har bedre strategier som de bruker på forhånd, underveis og i etterkant.
	Forklarer mer grundig om undersøkelsen og funn i artikkelen og T leser sammendrag av artikkel
Int.	Har du noen spørsmål til det som sto der?

Theresa	Egentlig ikke.
Int.	Da kan jeg begynne med å spørre deg hva det er som er det første som slår deg når du leser om funnene mine og påstandene mine?
Theresa	Jeg vil nok tro at det stemmer godt overens med det jeg ser blant elevene mine, at de synes det er vanskeligere med formelle enn uformelle situasjoner, i alle fall. Men det tror jeg har litt å gjøre med om man trener spesifikt på sånne situasjoner, eller ikke. De er nok kanskje klar over hvordan man skal gjøre det, men at man blir tatt litt på senga for man ikke er vant til å måtte bruke det ofte nok. Hvis man er i mer autentiske situasjoner, hvis man er i utlandet, så vil det være enklere å kanskje kunne klare å tilpasse språket. Det er litt overraskende at de bare har et par strategier, det synes jeg.
Int.	Ja, nå er denne undersøkelsen gjennomført blant 40 elever på VG1 nivå, så jeg kan ikke si at det er representativt for hele VG1 populasjonen i Norge. Men jeg syntes også at det var en del interessante indikasjoner i denne undersøkelsen, blant annet denne.
Theresa	Men hadde du gitt elevene en sett med mulige strategier?
Int.	Nei, jeg beskrev situasjonene grundig, og beskrev en oppgave og en hensikt med forespørselen de skulle produsere. Så spurte jeg hvordan de ville ha formulert den forespørselen. Du har nå allerede vært litt inne på det første jeg vil at vi skal diskutere. For elevene virket som om de var ganske trygge når det gjaldt uformelle situasjoner, men, som du også nevnte, at de var mer utrygge når det ble mer formelt. Du sa at du kjente deg igjen i den beskrivelsen, at det kunne passe for dine elever også?
Theresa	Ja, jeg tror det
Int.	Har du noen teorier om hvorfor der er mer trygge i uformelle enn i formelle?
Theresa	De er vel ikke... jeg tenker at noen mangler faktisk litt ordforråd. De er usikre på hvordan de skal formulere seg for å kunne gjøre en henvendelse. Derfor vil de tenke at det er mye lettere å bruke fyllord eller enkle ord da, i en uformell forespørsel, enn det de vil være i en formell en. Det krever mer kompetanse av dem.
Int.	I artikkelen skrev jeg at elevene bruker uformelle tale- og høflighetsstrategier, uansett situasjon. Det virker ikke som om de har utviklet evnen til å lese mottaker og situasjon og lese hvor uformelle eller formell den/det er. Hvilke erfaringer har du med dette?
Theresa	Vi har noen sånne, for eksempel, lytteoppgaver, hvor elevene må svare på spørsmål i etterkant for å vise hvor godt de har forstått det og hva slags henvendelse det var. Og her virker det som om det går veldig enkelt. Men da er det hvis de skal lytte og kun svare, uten å formulere noe selv. Hvis de faktisk skal formulere noe selv, så vil jeg tro at de blir enda vanskeligere.
Int.	Så de har kunnskapen om det, men de har ikke kommet dit hen at de kan anvende det selv enda?
Theresa	Kanskje det. Jeg tror de kan gjenkjenne det, men de kan ikke skape noe mer ut av det.
Int.	Men er dette noe dere er inne på med jevne mellomrom i timene?
Theresa	Jeg tror ikke de ulike situasjonene er det som blir fokusert mest på, egentlig. Jeg har ikke vært så mye borti den delen av det. Men i de vurderingssituasjonene de har, så blir de alltid testa i veldig mange forskjellige ting. Det er alltid veldig mange forskjellige skriftlige økter eller muntlige former, da, sånn at det krever noe helt annet av dem å skulle ha noe sånt som en bokkafé, som vi har, når de skal snakke om bøker og hvorfor de likte den, enn når de skal ha en muntlig tentamen der de skal diskutere seg fram til en problemstilling og samarbeide med andre.
Int.	Så det blir mer testet innbakt sammen med andre kompetanser?

Theresa	Ja.
Int.	Du sa at du reagerte på at elevene kun hadde en eller to strategier eller formuleringer som de brukte. I alle fall det som gikk igjen i min undersøkelse, det var at 'could you', 'would you', 'may I', osv. Og jeg påstår at dette kan være fordi disse uttrykkene er enkle å undervise, lære bort og vise eksempler på i timen – konkrete eksempler. Hvordan forholder du deg til den påstanden?
Theresa	Det kan jo hende at det stemmer. Samtidig som jeg vil tro at det ikke er sikkert at fokuset ligger så mye der uansett, at det heller er mer fokus på andre ting, at det er derfor det ikke undervises dirkete i det. Jeg vet ikke.
Int.	Men synes du den beskrivelsen med et litt begrenset antall strategier til disposisjon kan passe for dine elever også?
Theresa	Jeg vil kanskje tro det. At de bruker det. Jeg ser jo i alle fall at når de har et muntlig språk og de prøver å korrigere seg selv, så er det noen som klarer det fint. Det viser jo da kanskje en litt høyere kompetanse enn andre som bare 'oi, fader!' – på norsk, ikke sant. De har ikke kommet helt dit. Og det tror jeg kanskje gjenspeiler den samme situasjonen da, at hvis du er ute etter et sånt spesifikt senario da, sånn som du har testa.
Int.	En av påstandene jeg kommer med som kanskje vil skape størst reaksjoner, er at det virker som om pragmatisk kompetanse blir glemt i klasseromsundervisningen, og at... det er jo en ganske vag kompetanse, ganske vanskelig å definere akkurat... og elevene vil nok ikke klare å utvikle den alene, uten veiledning fra noen som kan det bedre. I og med at den er soppas vag, lite spesifikk kompetanse, at det kan være vanskelig for lærere å håndtere, at det derfor kan bli vanskelig å undervise konkret i den kompetansen. Hva tror du om det?
Theresa	Jeg tror det... Ja, det kan nok hende at det er som du sier at det er en vag kompetanse. Men når læreplanen skal tolkes på lokalt plan overalt så vil det naturlige være at man vektlegger ulike ting. Og så i bunn og grunn så er det det at man skal ha lesekompetanse, man skal ha skrivekompetanse, man skal ha lytte kompetanse... Det blir nok ofte til at man prioriterer de ferdighetene i stedet for da. At man tenker 'Ok! Hva er det som er det viktigste?'. Og alle kompetansemålene blir jo helt sikkert dekket i løpet av et skoleår, for det ser det jo ut som om de blir. Men... i hvilken grad og hvordan man tolker målene, det er jo to ulike ting.
Int.	Men i jobben din, føler du at du har nok folk å samarbeide med, spørre og få veiledning fra om du skulle undervist konkret, spesifikt i denne kompetansen?
Theresa	Ja, det vil jeg tro. Vi har jo folk som har jobbet der i 10-15 år, men også mange relativt ferske, så man har jo vært gjennom forskjellige ting, jobbet på flere skoler... så jeg tror nok absolutt det. Vi jobber jo veldig mye i team også.
Int.	Så du har mange å dele erfaringer med?
Theresa	Ja, det er akkurat det.
Int.	Det er mange som er involverte når man skal utvikle den pragmatiske kompetansen blant elevene. I artikkelen nevner jeg blant annet læreren, lærebøker, lydopptak, filmer, osv. Er det mulig å nevne en ting som du tror spiller den viktigste rollen i utviklingen? Den viktigste når det gjelder å skape interesse for dette blant elevene? Interesse for å ville lære mer om det?
Theresa	Jeg tror det må være rene situasjonsbeskrivelser, ha rollespill eller sitte to og to sammen å lage en samtale. På en eller annen måte. Jeg tror ikke det vil være veldig nyttig om de bare sitter å leser i boka uten å få prøvd det selv. Jeg tror nok læreren absolutt må være med der, men at det må være lærer med elever, at de kan klare å utvikle ting på egenhånd.
Int.	Så det må oppleves, man kan ikke bare lese i boka at 'sånn er det'?
Theresa	Ja, jeg tror det. Det vil ikke gjøre at de kan anvende det senere vil jeg tro.

Int.	Men tenker du at vi kan forsterke den rollen, for eksempel med rollespill da, at vi kan dra det inn i undervisningen for å gjøre det mer relevant i forhold til andre ting som elever må gjennom?
Theresa	Ja, det kan jo kanskje gjøres.... Jeg prøver å tenke på måter vi kanskje kunne brukt til å gjøre det... Om man har rollespill, så må de jo spille ulike roller og sette seg inn i ulike situasjoner. Og noen ganger vil det kanskje være hensiktsmessig å være større grupper, mens andre ganger kan man kanskje bare være to. Så jeg vet ikke helt hvordan man skal klare å få det inn sånn helt spesifikt at man MÅ gjøre det... Jeg tror det varierer veldig fra klasse til klasse om man må undervise i det, altså, stå foran klassen og snakke om det.
Int.	Du har jo fullført PPU. Husker du, når du tok det, om det var – på forelesning, seminargrupper eller fagdidaktikken, om det ble fokusert spesifikt på dette, fikk dere veiledning og tips i hvordan dere skal undervise i denne kompetansen.
Theresa	Vi spilte noen rollespill der en av oss skulle ringe for å bestille blomster og den andre skulle være ansatt i blomsterbutikk. Men ingenting utover det.... Og sånne rollespill er jo bra det, men jeg sitter jo ikke på alle disse beskrivelsene av situasjoner og roller... Det vil derfor være mer naturlig for meg å lage beskrivelser ut i fra de situasjonene som vi er i, i alle fall.
Int.	Da vil jeg helt til slutt snakke om læreverket. Hvilken bok bruker skolen din?
Theresa	Vi bruker 'Passage'.
Int.	Passage... bare sånn generelt, hva synes du om nytteverdien av den boka?
Theresa	Veldig liten... nei da! Når jeg tenker på den boka, så tenker jeg først og fremst på to ting. For det første så er temaene veldig dårlig inndelt. Jeg synes det er vanskelig å vite overganger, hva er det egentlig de er ute etter her? Jeg tror elevene synes det er vanskelig å fatte også, med mindre jeg setter helt konkrete mål og viser helt konkret hva som hører til den perioden. Men, jeg synes samtidig at det er veldig mange gode spørsmål å bruke i boka, sånn at du har alltid spørsmål som går på både skriveferdigheter og leseferdigheter og snakkeferdigheter og matematiskkompetanse, og alt sånn, egentlig. Så, mange av spørsmålene fungerer – til de tingene man jobber med. Men det blir fort kjedelig også, og gjøre de samme tingene. Og i forhold til temaene, så synes jeg det ikke fungerer. Jeg synes den har lite faktatekster som gir elevene noe, og jeg synes det er lite eksempler på skjønnlitterære tekster fra de forskjellige periodene og tider og... ja. Lite konkrete eksempler på alt.
Int.	Da er det siste spørsmålet mitt om du synes boka i seg selv kan gi deg hjelp eller veiledning i forhold til undervisning og fokus på pragmatisk kompetanse?
Theresa	Egentlig ikke... den har en liten del hvor den skiller litt mellom uformell og formell stil, men... det faller litt igjennom da! Det blir ikke tydelig nok, i så fall.
Int.	Så hva er hovedfokuset i boka da? Med tanke på ulike kompetanser?
Theresa	Da blir det jo først og fremst lese- og skriveferdigheter, egentlig. Det er det det er mest av.
avslutning	

Appendix 4: Transcription of Interview 2 - Maria

November 5, 2012

Nickname: Maria

Sex: Female

Age: 32

Education/employment: High school teacher in English and history; master student

PPU: completed

Number of years working as a teacher: 1

	* Int. forklarer bakgrunnen for undersøkelsen*
Int.	Ja, før vi begynner har jeg lyst at du skal se på et sitat. Det er hentet fra den læreplanen i engelsk, den delen som heter 'formålet med faget'.
Maria	ok
Int.	Kan du lese det først?
Maria	Ja, ok
Int.	Da først har jeg lyst til å spørre hvordan du tolker dette sitatet?
Maria	Tolker det... jeg tolker det sånn som det står.
Int.	Ja, for det er en beskrivelse av en kompetanse vi skal prøve å lære.
Maria	Ja, så den sier jo egentlig at jeg skal prøve å sette elevene i stand til å konversere da, eller kommunisere på ulike måter, i ulike situasjoner, både muntlig og skriftlig
Int.	Ja, så da, etter din mening..
Maria	Mhm?
Int.	hvor viktig er, etter din mening, den kompetansen å lære - når man skal lære språk på skolen, hvor viktig er det at elevene lærer den, eller utvikler den kompetansen?
Maria	Ejeg vil si at det i dagens samfunn så er det mer og mer viktig, at... det har viktig ganske lenge nå egentlig, i forhold til mere internasjonal kommunikasjon, mere... i forhold til flere møter av kulturer
Int.	Mhm
Maria	mmmm... og at, uansett, på en måte, uansett jobb, altså, om du er bilmekaniker eller hva du er, så vil du antageligvis havne i en situasjon hvor du må kommunisere på engelsk da, men folk fra et annet land. Og da er det jo visse sånne konvensjoner som gjelder for språk da.
Int.	Mhmm.. så da, hvor viktig er denne kompetansen?
Maria	Jeg vil si at det er viktig – veldig viktig.
Int.	Så da, den er viktig i seg selv, men, hvis du skal sammenligne med andre kompetanser som det å bli forventa at dem skal utvikle i engelsk faget.... Hvor viktig er den da? Hvis du ser på for eksempel grammatikk, grammatisk kompetanse, kompetanse i å lese, skrive....
Maria	Det er jo først og fremst, tenker jeg, viktig. Eller viktigst at du i det hele tatt klarer å gjøre deg forstått. Så du må ha en sånn basic forståelse av grammatikk og ord og sånn, og setningsoppbygging for i det hele tatt å være forståelig selvfølgelig.
Int.	Ja....

Maria	Men det er klart at hvis du er forståelig og har null, da, pragmatisk kompetanse, så kan du jo havne i en situasjon hvor du, selv om du er kommunikativ ikke er kommunikativ fordi du blir misforstått da, i måten du sier ting på, i måten du ordlegger deg på, måten du tiltaler noen på.
Int.	mhm
Maria	... Så jeg vil si at det er veldig viktig, men du må ha en sånn grunnleggende kunnskap om språk
Int.	Så da altså... den er viktig, men den må kombineres med andre for at den, ja, skal kunne være viktig eller komme til sin rett? eller man trenger en hvis grammatisk kompetanse og forståelse av språket for at man skal kunne vise den?
Maria	... altså man må jo i det hele tatt klare å kommunisere, ikke sant, det må du jo på alle språk, altså, uansett så må du jo klare å kommunisere...
Int.	mhm
Maria	Men, når du på en måte kan kommunisere og du står ovenfor en reell situasjon hvor du skal kommunisere, så må du jo kunne pragmatikken også...eller du bør kunne den, eller du må jo ikke, du kan jo selvfølgelig klare deg og være heldig, holdt jeg på å si, men... det bør jo ikke alltid å gå galt, men det er jo en fordel å kunne.
Int.	Mhm, nettopp... men du har jo brukt et uttrykk nå - pragmatisk kompetanse - og snakket om pragmatikk... så hva er det du legger i det uttrykket?
Maria	Da tenker jeg at det er å vite hvordan du skal si ting i forskjellige situasjoner... altså, de, de konvensjonene som gjelder da i ulike situasjoner ogaltså hva du sier, når du sier det og hvordan du sier det, da... kulturell kompetanse også!
Int.	Mhm... altså, nå har du jo litt erfaring fra engelsk klasserommet. Når du nå har definert pragmatisk kompetanse... hvis du tenker på den og så tenker du på elevene du har i klassen...
Maria	Mhm...
Int.	hva er ditt inntrykk til nå om nivået deres... har de i det hele tatt utviklet en form for pragmatisk kompetanse?
Maria	jeg vet egentlig ikke hvor mye jeg kan si om det... for det første snakker de jo ekstremt lite. Og når de snakker, snakker de ofte norsk, de vil helst ikke snakke engelsk. Vi har hatt et tilfelle hvor vi konkret har diskutert det, da snakket vi om stereotyper. Vi snakket om den jevne amerikaneren, hvordan de var, og da var det en som sa det at... hvordan var det... det endte i alle fall med at vi snakket om, fordi det var en som mente at amerikanerne var veldig sånn direkte da, og ofte kunne fornærme folk. Og da tenker jeg at det er vel egentlig en mangel på litt den kulturelle kompetansen om at amerikanerne ofte har en mer direkte væremåte, og de mener kanskje ikke på noen måte å fornærme deg, men de oppleves sånn. så vi hadde en sånn samtale der da og snakket litt rundt det...
Int.	mhm... følte du i den diskusjonen at dere fikk fram noe, at de viste at dette kunne de litt om, eller hadde tenkt litt på?
Maria	Nei, altså, nå er jo dette her klasser som ikke akkurat nødvendigvis gir så mye respons da. de hører mest, og så sier de ikke noe tilbake. Men jeg fikk ingen som helst respons på at dette kunne de, heller ikke på at de forstå det jeg snakka om. Men jeg vet ikke jeg, det der med at de ofte slår om til norsk også, det er jo, kanskje det er en kombinasjon av mange ulike kompetanser de kanskje mangler... men en av de er vel kanskje ofte, sånn som du snakker om, å komme med forespørsler da. De vet ikke hvordan de skal si det, eller de vet hvordan de skal si det på norsk... eller av og til så vet de ikke det heller da!
Int.	hehe, nei...
Maria	Så, jeg vet ikke... men det er så stille klasser at det er vanskelig å si. Vanskelig å få inntrykk av det.
Int.	Mhm, ja! jeg har enda et sitat til deg, som jeg har lyst at du skal se på... dette er fra beskrivelsen av kompetansemålene for VG1, eller etter fullført VG1 da...

Maria	Ok.
Int.	Dette er da to punkter som beskriver den kompetansen de skal ha oppnådd etter VG1, og da lurer jeg på... syns du den kompetansen som blir beskrevet her, syns du det er realistiske mål å ha for elever på dette nivået?
Maria	om det er realistisk?
Int.	Mmm
Maria	... det står jo ikke at de skal velge og bruke egnede skrive- og talestrategier i absolutt alle formål, situasjoner og sjangere... det er kanskje litt dårlig avgrensa i utgangspunktet, det er litt sånn «hvor mange formål», «hvilke situasjoner» og «Hvilke sjangere»? Altså, er det en total pakke her, eller er det sånn, de skal kjenne til det?
Int.	Ja...
Maria	så jeg synes selve kompetansemålet er litt sånn diffust, kanskje... jeg synes det er realistisk at de skal kunne velge og å bruke noen... altså, det er ikke så vanskelig å vite forskjellen på formell og uformell - den er ganske grei. Det er enten det ene eller det andre. Å kjenne til, i alle fall mange av kjennetegnene da. Situasjoner... altså, det kan være så mangt da.
Int.	Er det noen situasjoner du ser for deg at elever bør kjenne til og vite hvordan de skal takle?
Maria	De bør absolutt kjenne til det, men om det er realistisk at de skal ... er det snakk om en total pakke, så synes jeg ikke at det er realistisk at de skal kunne klare det. Jeg tror aldri at vi skal kunne forberede de på alle mulige situasjoner og formål de havner i og sjangere de skal måtte beherske... men at de kjenner til noen basics? absolutt, ja, og de bør vite forskjell på å snakke til en arbeidsgiver og snakke til en kollega og snakke til en venn, for eksempel.... Og det er det jo viktig at de kan, for de skal jo ut i arbeidslivet etter hvert. Jeg vet ikke helt hva du tenker jeg?
Int.	Det jeg er ute etter, er vel egentlig... for det er jo ofte at kompetansemål kanskje kan virke litt vage, vanskelig å vite akkurat hva de er ute etter. Og at de kan være litt ambisiøse med tanke på hva de forventer at en elev skal kunne utvikle med 5 timer engelsk i uka?
Maria	Altså, jeg tenker da at en lærer da må prøve å avgrense det, for sin egen del og da må man jo tenke hva det er mest sannsynlig at elevene vil få bruk for senere i livet da. Og det tenker jeg er arbeidssituasjoner, og reise.
Int.	Men det mener du skal være spesifikt fokusert på i undervisninga?
Maria	Altså, jeg tenker at det kanskje vil være viktigst for dem å kunne, det er mest sannsynlig situasjoner de vil havne i da. Underviser du yrkesfaglig da, for eksempel, underviser du en bilmekaniker, da, som må ringe et internasjonalt firma for å spørre om en bildel, så kan det jo være helt konkret viktig for han å vite hvordan han forholder seg i en formell situasjon sånn. så når jeg da sier kollega-messig, sjef-messig, og sånn, det ville jo være nyttig for de i alle fall. Det er sikkert nyttig for de å kunne uttrykke meninger og skrive avisinnlegg og alt sånn... men det er litt mer sånn, altså praktisk bruk, hva er det mer sannsynlig at de havner i da...
Int.	mhm
Maria	Men så er det sånn... ja, jeg har vel kanskje ikke tenkt så veldig nøye gjennom det heller.
	pause
Int.	Ja, da har du fått lest en sammendrag av artikkelen min. Har du noen spørsmål til det før vi setter i gang?
Maria	Nei, det var tydelig.
Int.	Bra! for det jeg har lyst at vi skal gjør nå, er at vi skal gå litt nærmere inn på det jeg har jobbet med, spesielt funnene mine i artikkelen. Resultatene av undersøkelsen min. Og det første spørsmålet mitt er rett og slett: Hva er det første som slår deg når du leser dette sammendraget her av artikkelen min? Hva er det, ja, det første du

	tenker på?
Maria	Nei, jeg tenker at jeg er enig.
Int.	Hvorfor?
Maria	Hvorfor? Nei, jeg... jeg merker jo at man har vanskeligere for å forholde seg til folk i formelle situasjoner. Man mangler ord, eller måter å formulere seg på. Åh... enten da så begynner de å stotre eller så velger de da en uformell strategi...
Int.	Akkurat... noe av det første jeg snakke om, eller nevnte i sammendraget, det var jo at det virket som om elevene... altså, i undersøkelsen min, måtte jo elevene forholde seg til både uformelle situasjoner, som å spør om veien eller om å låne penn og papir i timen, eller mer formelle, som å spørre om å låne penger en venn eller å henvende seg til arbeidsgiver. Og når jeg analyserte resultatene, kom jeg fram til at det virket som om elevene behersket uformelle situasjoner ganske godt, men at de virket mer usikre når det kom til mer formelle situasjoner. At de visste ikke helt hvordan de skulle formulere seg, eller oppføre seg nesten på en måte som passet til situasjonen.
Maria	Mhm...
Int.	Stemmer dette overens med dine egne erfaringer fra klasserommet så langt? Kan du kjenne deg igjen i den beskrivelsen?
Maria	Ja, altså... muntlig så har jeg jo som sagt ikke så mye erfaring, for de sier jo ikke så mye. Men når jeg var i praksis, da var de jo muntlig aktive de elevene jeg hadde der. Og de er jo ikke så veldig formelle, hverken i måten de snakker til meg på eller ...eller når vi trente helt konkret på det da, så manglet de de strategiene. Men jeg ser jo også at de har vanskeligheter når de har presentasjoner. De blir for formelle og skriftlige igjen. Det er akkurat som om de ikke behersker den formell/uformell biten der heller. Altså der har de jo en sjanse til å være mer uformelle da, som jo egentlig er det de klarer best, men da kjører de en formell, skriftlig måte å snakke på. De er veldig manusavhengig. De mangler jo helt klart en kompetanse der. Men i skriftlige arbeid, så ser jeg jo også at de mangler den formelle biten igjen da. Når de uttrykker egne meninger... da blir det med en gang et veldig enkelt språk.
Int.	du har nevnt at de mangler litt kompetanse her, i alle fall det når de skal skille uformelle og formelle strategier... har du noen tanker om hva grunnen til dette kan være? Undersøkelsen min viste jo at de taklet uformelle strategier litt bedre en formelle strategier, har du noen tanker om hva grunnen til dette kan være?
Maria	Ja, altså jeg tror jo ikke... jeg vet ikke hvordan det er på tidligere trinn. Så det kan jo være at det er noe de ikke... altså, jeg vil anta at enten så har det ikke vært fokus nok, eller så har de rett og slett ikke gjort seg nytte av undervisningen da, hvis den har forekommet. Men, jeg tenker samtidig, at jeg er ikke så sikker på at de har den kompetansen på norsk heller da... Jeg vet ikke om dette her nødvendigvis er kun på engelsk...
Int.	... ja, det var jo også litt av grunnen til at jeg startet med undersøkelsen min også. Jeg ble så overrasket over hvor uformelle man, eller elever da, er mot ... ja, spesielt kanskje mot lærere og andre ansatte på skolen. Og det var jo på norsk. Så...
Maria	Ja, for jeg tenker at erfaring og alder... kanskje man ikke har det skillet lenger i det samfunnet generelt da. jeg er ikke så gammel liksom. Men når jeg gikk på skolen, så tiltalte vi læreren som frøken. Vi sa aldri navnet eller 'du' eller noe sånt... vi hadde, vi sa etternavnet, eller 'lærer' eller 'frøken'. Det er visket ut noen skiller her da. Og, det er klart, det kan jo være dumt i forhold til deres videre liv, at skolen er så 'uhierarkisk' da. Vi skal liksom ikke ha noe maktutøvelse, men at det ikke er noe sånn høflighetsgreie her, og så kommer de ut i arbeidslivet uten å være vant til å ha en autoritet i det hele tatt...
Int.	Noe annet jeg nevner i artikkelen, er at elever de bruker, i alle fall i min undersøkelse, så virket det som om de brukte uformell tale og strategier uansett om de spurte om veien, eller snakket med sjefen. De klarte liksom ikke tilpasse den

	strategien de valgte eller måten de formulerte seg på til situasjonen de var i eller den de skulle henvende seg til. Så... ja, hvordan reagerer du på disse påstandene?
Maria	Nei, altså jeg tror jo ikke de er i stand til det. Altså, hverken på norsk eller engelsk. Jeg tror elever generelt mangler kompetanse på formelle situasjoner, for det er så lite formelt de er utsatt for. De er ikke vant til å måtte bruke det. Og man slår på en måte ikke ned på det. Altså, jeg har jo elever som er ganske direkte da, som er, holdt på å si, både uhøflige og upassende i måten de snakker til meg på, både på norsk og ellers. Jeg vet ikke jeg.... Jeg burde vel kanskje ha sagt fra, men jeg gjør det ikke....
Int.	Nei... men tidligere så diskuterte vi om det var et realistisk mål det som ble beskrevet i læreplanen. Men hvis vi tenker på det du snakker om nå da, at de ikke har det uformelle-formelle skillet på norsk heller..
Maria	mhm...
Int.	kan vi d forvente det, at de skal klare det på engelsk?
Maria	altså i forhold til situasjonen her og nå, og realiteten som er nå, så nei... du kan ikke forvente.. eller ja, på en måte ... det er jo ikke veldig komplisert å forstå, egentlig. det er lett å forklare for en elev at når du snakker til en voksen person du ikke kjenner, så.... Hvis det er det man vil da... i enkelte kulturer så er det jo helt utenkelig for et barn eller en ungdom å snakke til en voksen på noe annet enn en høflig måte. så ja, jeg tror ikke det er så innmari vanskelig å lære de på en måte... men man må jo gjøre det da!
Int.	mhm
Maria	Og man må gjøre det både i norsk og i engelsk! Og i alle andre fag også!
Int.	noe jeg syntes gikk igjen i svarene jeg fikk, var at elevene, i alle fall flertallet, de hadde en, kanskje to, strategier de brukte uansett hvilken type forespørsel de skulle formulere. Og i tillegg virket det som om de strategiene de brukte, de kan være inspirert av morsmålet. De kan være veldig lik i oppbygningen som formuleringer vi har på norsk. Jeg tenker for eksempel på 'could you', 'would you', 'may I'... dette er veldig basic formuleringer å bruke når man skal produsere en forespørsel på engelsk. Disse er også ganske lik måten vi spør om noe når vi formulerer oss på norsk. De alle fleste elevene brukte da disse strategiene, disse formuleringene uansett hvilken situasjon de var i, eller hvem de skulle snakke til. hva tenker du om disse påstandene? Hvis vi kan begynne der?
Maria	At de er påvirket av norsk?
Int.	Mhm
Maria	Ja, det tror jeg absolutt. Jeg tror forskjellen på engelsk og norsk, i den kompetansen her, er at på norsk mangler de nok forståelsen, den kulturelle forståelsen, men ofte så har de ordforrådet. Og de vet nesten instinktivt med setningsoppbygging, hvordan de skal gjøre det. Men på engelsk så drar de med seg at de mangler den kulturelle forståelsen, men så mangler de samtidig vokabularet. De kan ikke noe annet en det uformelle, de mangler forståelsen av setningsoppbygging... og da vil de jo selvfølgelig dra med seg det norske da, for det er det eneste de kan, det eneste de kjenner til.
Int.	Så de kompenserer for det de mangler på engelsk ved å bruke den kompetansen de har på norsk?
Maria	Ja, det er det jeg tror.
Int.	Jeg kommer med en påstand i artikkelen min, som kanskje kan være litt... som man kanskje reagerer litt på. Jeg påstår at en av grunnene til at elevene tydeligvis mangler en viktig del av kompetansen sin på engelsk, altså den pragmatiske kompetansen, det er at undervisningen av denne kompetansen blir glemt i klasserommet. Den får ikke like mye fokus som den skulle fått da. og i tillegg til dette påstår jeg at pragmatisk kompetanse kan være litt vagt og u håndterlig for lærere også, og at det kan være vanskelig å definere akkurat hva det egentlig er og derfor hvordan man skal undervise det. Dette fører da kanskje til at man hopper litt

	over det, man vet ikke hvordan man skal takle det selv. hvordan reagerer du på dette?
Maria	jo, jeg tror nok at det er mye sant i det.
Int.	Mhm
Maria	Uten at jeg vet det. Jeg kan ikke huske at vi lærte noe om det i min egen utdanning på universitetet. men som jeg også sa, jeg har jo vokst opp i en tid hvor det å tiltale voksne... jeg har jo lært høflighet da, generelt, så det har jeg jo alltid på en måte vært bevisst, men jeg har nok ikke hatt ordforrådet på engelsk, og jeg kan fortsatt finne meg i situasjoner, personlig, hvor jeg blir litt sånn der 'skitt! hvordan skal jeg si dette her på engelsk?'
Int.	Ja..
Maria	Så selvfølgelig vil elevene føle det sånn! Men.. ja.. pluss at det er ullent. Ja, det er ullent og ... du kan, hvis du skal tenke at du skal lære elevene hva de skal si i ulike situasjoner, som vi sa i sta, hvordan skal du avgrense det? Skal de vite hva de skal si i alle situasjoner? I absolutt alle situasjoner i absolutt alle land? I møte med alle kulturer? Da er jo det uhåndterlig.... Men å bevisstgjøre de at de må ha i bakhodet at kultur er noe de må ta med i ligningen, sånn at de kanskje kommer til et land og setter seg inn i kulturen i forhold til å kommunisere... at de har den kunnskapen, det tror jeg absolutt at man kanskje både kan og bør lære de, og det tror jeg kanskje ikke blir gjort.
Int.	Jeg tenker at de skal...nå er det jo sånn at man som regel lærer engelsk i klasserommet. Har du noen tanker om hvordan man kan bringe den kulturkunnskapen inn i klasserommet?
Maria	altså, man har jo de.... Selvfølgelig, de online kildene.... At man kan finne situasjoner der da, autentiske situasjoner og sette de i kontakt med andre, osv.osv, men da blir det jo...Ok! Skal man sette de i kontakt med israelsk ungdom eller hva som helst da... så da får de jo... jeg vet ikke om de israelske ungdommene ville lært så mye høflighet av det... de ville vel kommunisert mer fra ungdom til ungdom... så det er jo kanskje urealistisk at man skal finne en gruppe voksne, engelske mennesker som sitter og chatter med en klasse på nettet... jeg vet ikke jeg... det må jo på en måte være å prøve å bringe elevene inn i situasjoner hvor de må fokusere på det... jeg har ikke noen gode forslag
Int.	Skal ikke kreve det av deg heller! Men hvis du tenker at du vil undervise i pragmatikk i klassen din, føler du at du på jobben din at du har, eller kan få, veiledning til å vite hvordan man skal gripe det an?
Maria	Ja, jeg føler det. Vi er et bra team.
Int.	Her er en siste påstand. Jeg har tenkt litt på hva som kan påvirke eller hjelpe elevene med å utvikle pragmatisk kompetanse. Jeg nevner for eksempel at læreren spiller en viktig rolle, læreboka, andre læremiddel som lydopptak, filmer, transkribering av autentisk tale, lærerutdanningen spiller jo også inn. Av de tingene jeg har nevnt nå, eller andre ting du kommer på, hva tror du spiller den viktigste rollen i elevenes utvikling av pragmatisk kompetanse.
Maria	skape situasjoner hvor mangel på pragmatisk kompetanse har slått til og slått ut negativt da, hvor du viser autentiske situasjoner hvor dere diskuterer ' hva gjorde han nå' og ditten og datten. Hvorfor gjorde han følgene? Sånn for å lære de det. Læreren er jo også viktig, og da må jo den vite om det, og da er lærerutdanninga viktig. Og da må de jo øve på det også da. Det er vanskelig å si en ting som er viktigst. Det er en totalgreie.
Int.	Så det er flere ting som sammen bidrar til utvikling av kompetansen, ikke bare en ting som er aller viktigst. Forsto jeg deg rett?
Maria	Ja.
Int.	du sa jo at lærerutdanninga var et viktig ledd.
Maria	Ja, man er jo avhengig av at lærerne selv er bevisste.

Int.	så når du gikk på PPU, husker du om forelesere, seminarledere, osv, fokuserte de eksplisitt på utvikling av pragmatisk kompetanse i undervisningen din?
Maria	Nei, jeg tror ikke det. Jeg tror ikke jeg kom borti det før jeg begynte på masteren. Ikke med praktiske eksempel og øvelser i alle fall. Kun bitte litt teori.
Int.	Ok... jeg lurte litt på, helt til slutt. Boka du bruker i engelsk...hvilken bok bruker du, først og fremst?
Maria	Stunt heter den...
Int.	Stunt, ok. hva føler du, sånn generelt, at nytteverdien er av dette læreverket?
Maria	Sånn generelt, så synes jeg den er litt rotete oppbygd, overfladisk
Int.	Men hvis du bestemmer deg for å... hvis du vil lage et opplegg på pragmatikk, lage situasjoner hvor elever oppdager bruken, nytteverdien av denne kompetansen... at du vil bringe kulturkunnskapen inn i klasserommet, føler du at stunt gir deg innholdet, hjelpen og veiledningen til å planlegge dette opplegget? Har du tilgang på det du trenger her?
Maria	det er vanskelig å svare på... og så er jeg ikke nødvendigvis så veldig tilhenger av å være for avhengig av læreboka... så...men ja ... kanskje? Man kunne sikkert finne noe man kunne bruke, men så mye tror jeg ikke det er i akkurat den boka.
	avslutning

Appendix 5: Transcription of interview 3 - Peter

November 20, 2012

Nickname: Peter

Sex: male

Age: 49

Education/employment: High school teacher in English, Norwegian and German, has a master's degree in adapted education

PPU: completed

Number of years working as a teacher: 8; 4 in high school

	Int. forklarer bakgrunnen for undersøkelsen
Int.	*Leser utdrag fra LK06 – formålet med faget Når du hører dette sitatet, hva er det første som slår deg, eller hva er det første du tenker på?
Peter	Hva jeg legger i det sitatet? Jeg tenker at i engelsk, som på norsk, har man forståelse for at man har muntlige og skriftlige sjangere. Og da har du jo som på norsk ord og uttrykk og sånne ting. Og dette med fullstendige og ufullstendige setninger, og sånne ting. Og så vil du jo ha underarter innenfor det også. På muntlig, for eksempel, må de kunne skille mellom det som er dagligtale-språk og det som er mer sånn formelt, gjennom presentasjoner, for eksempel. Og at de må ha forståelse for at de i England har en annen omgangsform og en annen måte. For eksempel omgangsformer i skolesituasjoner vil jo være vesentlig. Jeg har jo hatt samarbeid med en engelsk skole og en tysk, så jeg har jo på en måte fått sett hvor forskjellig Ja..... dette med formelt og uformelt og hvordan man snakker mellom lærer og elev, at det er veldig forskjellig. Da med tysk språk som det mest formelle og engelsk som nummer 2 og norsk som det mest uformelle.
Int.	Merket du forskjell? Hvis du har tyske elever og norske, hvordan Merker du forskjell i hvordan disse formulerer seg på engelsk?
Peter	Ja, det gjør man jo til en viss grad. Men du kan si at de tyske elevene som vi hadde, de hadde jo en dårlig, eller svakere engelsk enn det som norske elever har. Så du får forskjeller der også. Men det er en forskjell i tone og sånne ting. Den avstanden du har, og dette med respekt, omgangsformer og sånne ting da. Det merket jo elevene også. Men de la ikke om likevel da – hvis du skjønner?
Int.	Mhm...
Peter	Det gjorde de ikke.
Int.	Men hvis du tenker på engelsk faget, hvor viktig mener du at den kompetansen vi har snakket om nå ... Hvor viktig er det at elevene utvikler den? Hvor viktig er det at de mestrer den i engelsk faget?
Peter	Rent personlig så tenker jeg det at det er en klar fordel. Men min opplevelse er det at det er andre ting, sånn rent grunnleggende kunnskaper og kanskje det skriftlige som blir mer vektlagt enn det muntlige. Det krever litt....du kan si... sånne skriftlige sjangere og sånne ting, det er veldig lett å finne eksempler på det, det er veldig lett å jobbe med det. Du har mange tekster og sånne ting, ikke sant. Mens på

	den muntlige siden kan det være vanskeligere å finne eksempler på akkurat det, og forståelse for kultur og sånn da. Jeg tenker at sånne ting nesten krever at om man skal forstå det så må man ha vært der, sant... utveksling og sånne ting.
Int.	mhmm...
Peter	Jeg tror at det kan være vanskelig å formidle den forskjellen, innenfor de rammene man har. Vi har jo et begrenset antall timer og vi skal gjennom det og det, ikke sant. Når jeg har jobbet for eksempel, så har det gått med mye mer tid på å jobbe med det som liksom er pensum, det som står i læreboka, tekster, og sånne ting. Å fokusere på muntlig kompetanse blir det mindre tid til da.
Int.	Men du sier pensum... Kompetansen vi diskuterer er jo en del av pensum den også? Læreplanen forventer fokus her også?
Peter	Ja, det er det. Men det er ulike måter å jobbe på, ikke sant. Man kan legge det fram, snakke teoretisk om det. Men å få det fram, å skape situasjoner - det er vanskelig. Så derfor mener jeg at det er lettere og større sjanse for å få elevene til å øke kompetansen innenfor det skriftlige, sant? For med det muntlige.... For å øke forståelsen her, må du egentlig ha vært der, i målkulturen. Du må ha sett det... en ting er å snakke om det, men det blir ikke reelt for elevene, tror jeg.
Int.	Men selv om det er vanskelig å demonstrere eller gi elevene praktisk erfaring innen denne kompetansen, mener du Hvor viktig mener du denne kompetansen er, altså det å kunne tilpasse språket, hvor viktig er den i forhold til andre kompetanser som elevene skal utvikle i løpet av årene med engelsk? Jeg tenker for eksempel på grammatikk, lesing, skrivning...
Peter	Jeg tenker jo...skal jeg være ærlig, så tenker jeg at det er andre ting som kommer først.
Int.	Som for eksempel?
Peter	Altså de grunnleggende kunnskapene innen engelsk, det å beherske språket sånn som det er, struktur. Og så tenker jeg at når du begynner å snakke om ulike stilformer og ulike former for tiltale og sånne ting, så kommer dette etterpå. Først må du kunne språket, beherske det sånn som det er, rent formelt sett, ikke sant? Og så kan du begynne å se på ulike ting.
Int.	Så vi kan si at det er en kompetanse som... den blir viktigere etter hvert som man blir mer avansert i språket?
Peter	Ja, man må komme på et visst nivå først. For det er jo ikke det første du gjør, sant? Du må først sørge for den grunnleggende forståelsen. Og da vil det jo være ulike nivåer på det. Og så vil jeg tro at det... vi må innse at det med språk ... altså... det å tilpasse språket til språksituasjonen og kulturelt og sånne ting, det handler jo ikke bare om språk. Det handler jo like mye om generell kulturell forståelse og selvinnsikt og sånt. Og her vil det være forskjeller også. Så det.... Det kan være mange som er god i språk men som mangler den biten, for å si det sånn. Så... du må på en måte øve på det i tillegg. Og jeg tenker også at ... min opplevelse er på en måte at elevene legger ikke så stor vekt på dette heller. Det er ikke det de fokuserer på heller... Men altså.... Snakker vi muntlig eller snakker vi skriftlig nå?
Int.	Fokuset i undersøkelsen jeg har gjennomført har vært på det muntlige og språk i muntlige situasjoner.
Peter	Ja, akkurat. Du får jo dette ofte på eksamen, dette med formelt og uformelt når det gjelder det skriftlige.
Int.	Ja, for det gjelder jo både skiftelig og muntlig, et er klart. Men hvis vi nå ser på kompetansemålene.... De beskriver jo hvilken kompetanse elevene er forventet med etter fullført VG1. Her nevnes det blant annet at elevene skal kunne velge og bruke skrivestrategier, talestrategier som er egnet og tilpassa formålet, og situasjon og sjanger. I tillegg skal eleven kunne beskrive og vurdere effekten av ulike uttrykksmåter. Etter din mening, er dette realistiske mål å ha for

	eleven, på dette nivået?
Peter	Ja..... altså.... Ja.
Int.	Hvorfor?
Peter	Jo, altså du kan si... jeg synes det er realistiske mål å ha, men det er ikke realistisk å tenke at dette skal være dyptgående og reflektert og gjennomført, og sånne ting. Jeg regner ikke med at de skal være språkforskere og kulturkennere og sånne ting. Men at de skal ha et bevisst forhold til at det er sånn, det bør de kunne ha. For det er jo overførbart fra det vanlige, dagligdagse språket som de og har og som de må kjenne til. Så en viss kjennskap bør de ha, men spørsmålet er hvor mye vi skal forvente. Det er noe annet. Men å skjønne at det er forskjeller, det må de kunne gjøre, og å kunne lære litt om det.
Int.	Så man bør ha kunnskap om det, vite at det er der og at det er noen forskjeller der, uten nødvendigvis å kunne bruke det så mye i praksis, er det det du mener?
Peter	Ja, altså.. det kan vi ikke forvente. Dette er ting som du må lære... det er på en måte 'learning by doing', du lærer det ved å være der. Jeg tror det blir veldig vanskelig å oppnå det samme gjennom rollespill eller sånne ting. Da måtte man ha undervisningsopplegg som gikk ut på det og som la opp til det. Man måtte kunne se film og sånt som fokuserer dirket på det. Hvis man har sånne ting....
Int.	Akkurat. Ja, da har jeg lyst til at vi skal se nærmere på funnene jeg har gjort i artikkelen min. Og før vi begynner vil jeg gjerne at du leser gjennom et kort sammendrag av artikkelen min.
	Peter leser sammendrag av artikkelen
Int.	Virker det OK?
Peter	Nei, alt virker greit!
Int.	Ja, da vil jeg begynne med å spørre deg: hva er det første som slår deg når du leser dette sammendraget? Hva er det første du tenker på?
Peter	Nei, altså, det var jo interessant. Det var heller ikke overraskende, det var det jeg tenkte!
Int.	Ja, ok... I undersøkelsen min måtte elevene forholde seg til både formelle og uformelle situasjoner. Og...analysen min viser at elevene takler uformelle situasjoner godt, at disse behersker de. Men når de skulle takle mer formelle situasjoner, som å spørre om å låne penger eller å snakke til arbeidsgiver, da slet de litt mer. De visste ikke helt hvordan de skulle formulere seg eller oppføre seg i disse situasjonene. Så... kjenner du deg igjen i denne beskrivelsen? Stemmer denne overens med de erfaringene du har fra klasserommet?
Peter	Ja, altså de elevene jeg har hatt og sånne ting?
Int.	Ja?
Peter	Ja, det vil jeg si! Ja, det kan de gjøre....
Int.	Har du noen tanker om hva grunnen til dette kan være?
Peter	Hva som er årsaken til det?
Int.	Ja?
Peter	Nei, altså, jeg tenker jo på en måte at....det første som slår meg, er jo... altså, hvor lærer de engelsk, det er jo det ene. Og de lærer jo engelsk gjennom massemedia og gjennom den biten med film og musikk og sånn. Og der er det jo kanskje ikke så mye fokus på akkurat det? I alle fall ikke sånn at de tenker så mye over det. og så, den andre muligheten de kan lære engelsk på, det er jo gjennom undervisningen. Og der er det sikkert ikke så mye fokus på det, tenker jeg. Det er det som er årsaken til det. Jeg tror det er det som er årsaken i alle fall. Det er ikke lagt opp til det...
Int.	Du nevner to kilder til kunnskap i engelsk. Hvilken av disse tror du har størst

	påvirkningskraft?
Peter	På elevene?
Int.	Ja...
Peter	Ja, altså når det gjelder å lære seg kultur og sånne ting, så er det jo helt klart film og massemedia som er viktigst og... ja... engelsk i klasserommet har jo en tendens til å bli noe som er dødt, noe teoretisk og uvirkelig, sant... Mens det de ser på film og på TV, det er på en måte det som blir det reelle. Ja.... Så... ja. Tor jeg da!
Int.	Nettopp.... Men, at de takler uformelle situasjoner best....de brukte også uformelle høflighets- og talestrategier, uansett situasjon. Det var helt tydelig at de ikke klarte å tilpasse strategivalg, formuleringer til situasjon og mottaker. Hva er erfaringen din med dette? Altså elevenes kompetanse til å tilpassespråket? Kompetanse i å lese mottaker, lese situasjon?
Peter	Min erfaring er at det er noen få som kan det. Min erfaring er at de som kan det, det er de som kan det på norsk også. Den bevisstheten om man har en mottaker. Du kan si at... vi på skolen vår har jo reist en del, og vi har hatt elever som har vært med. Og da har vi jo noen elever som vi ser at.... De er på en måte bevisst hvem de snakker med, hva de sier og situasjoner. Noen få elever har den kompetansen. Det er en slags sosial kompetanse. De snakker på en måte til læreren, og på en annen måte til en annen elev, og på en tredje måte hvis det er noen som trenger hjelp eller sånn. De er i stand til å tilpasse seg til den som hører på, sant? På norsk altså! Ja... og når de er ute på reise, da får de det til da også, på engelsk. De ser det, og de lærer veldig fort ved å prøve og å observere. Men det store flertallet de har det ikke på norsk og de har det ikke på engelsk. Så min oppfatning er at det kanskje det.... Det er veldig mye som ligger i personligheten naturlig... altså, når det gjelder den mottakerbevisstheten da.... Og trygghet, ikke minst! Det å kunne skifte mellom ulike ting, det handler jo og å være trygg.
Int.	Men de elevene som du da sier har det på norsk og som også kan bruke det på engelsk, er det de samme som er sterkest i faget generelt?
Peter	Nei, ikke nødvendigvis. Ikke i det faglige nei... De kan være det, men de trenger ikke å være det. Min opplevelse er at de heller er sterke sosialt. Trygg i sosiale situasjoner. De tørr å snakke og sånne ting. For det handler jo om det også.
Int.	Det å være trygg sosialt kan jo gjerne være noe som kommer med alderen. Er da dette en kompetanse som krever en viss grad av modenhet?
Peter	Ja, altså, jeg tenker jo at det å kunne velge forskjellige strategier og kunne forholde seg til ulike situasjoner – på norsk- det er heller ikke så enkelt for den aldersgruppen. Det handler litt om det også. Og det handler om å vite og å være bevisst på det. Veldig mange i den alderen der er ikke bevisst eller tenker over hvilken rolle de tar, eller hvor de befinner seg. Det handler jo stort sett om i den perioden å fungere i forhold til jevnaldrende, ikke sant? Mens alt annet blir mindre viktig, ikke sant? Det er jo sånn det er.... Jeg tror det er et viktig element i alle fall, i forhold til kompetansen. Det handler ikke bare om å kunne språket, men å kunne forstå at man forholder seg annerledes til ulike situasjoner. Og å vite hva man skal gjøre.
Int.	Nå har du kommet litt inn på noe av det jeg fant i artikkelen min også, at det virker som om elevene drar inn mye av det de kan allerede på morsmålet, at de anvender mye av den kunnskapen. Og noe av det jeg så i undersøkelsen min, var det at de brukte mange formuleringer som tydelig var inspirert av tilsvarende formuleringer på norsk. Ofte hadde de og kun en eller to formuleringer de brukte, uansett situasjon. du kjenner deg igjen i den beskrivelsen?
Peter	Ja, helt klart.
Int.	Da er vi jo enige på det punktet! Beskrivelsene jeg kommer med i artikkelen kan brukes til å beskrive dine elever også?
Peter	Ja, jeg tror det.

Int.	Du snakket i sted om at denne kompetansen vi snakker om, ja, undervisningen her, det vanskeligere enn å undervise for eksempel i grammatiske regler, lesing og skrivning. Og det er jeg også inne på i artikkelen. Det virker som om undervisningen i denne kompetansen, fokuset på den, blir glemt i klasserommet. jeg tror ikke dette er noe elevene kan oppdage på egenhånd, de trenger veiledning. Og.... Jeg sier også at det å definere denne kompetansen, hva den innebærer, hva vi forventer at elevene skal lære – det kan være vanskelig for læreren å definere også. Så kanskje det er derfor den blir skjøvet litt til side i forhold til andre kompetanser som er enklere å fokusere på, enklere å illustrere og undervise i. Er du enig i den påstanden?
Peter	Ja.
Int.	Kan du tenke deg noen andre aspekter som kan bidra til at denne kompetansen ikke blir prioritert i undervisningen, enn de vi allerede har vært inne på?
Peter	Ja, lærebøkene!
Int.	Hva tenker du på da?
Peter	Jeg tenker at hvis du ser på lærebøkene for VG1 – du har jo forskjellige typer lærebøker – hvis du er på hva fokuset er, så har jeg ikke sett at det har vært et eget opplegg for å se på forskjeller mellom ulike situasjoner og sånne ting. Jeg ser jo at det på en måte går på det formelle og uformelle i forhold til jobb, sant, jobbsituasjoner og sånne ting da... Det gjør det. Formelt – uformelt, der. Men når det gjelder omgangstone eller når det gjelder sånt.... Så er det ikke så mye der. Det er noveller der av Hemingway og tekster fra ulike miljøer og engelskspråklige land, og det er litt om politiske system og litt om urbefolkning... sant... så det er mye om kulturer, det handler om ulike kulturer og sånne ting. Forskjeller mellom amerikansk og engelsk og australsk og sånt.... Ikke sant, men ikke på den biten der. Jeg har ikke sett at det har blitt vektlagt i lærebøkene.
Int.	Så det er ikke bare læreren som synes at dette er et litt vanskelig tema?
Peter	Ikke sant! Ja, jeg vet ikke om det er bevisst gjort... Og det er jo ikke et problem å fylle engelsk undervisningen et år uten å komme inn på dette temaet også. Det er mer enn nok å ta fatt i! Mer enn nok å jobbe med. Og jeg ser da i lærebøkene at det ikke er et prioritert tema. Og på eksamen og sånne ting, det går kanskje på det formelle og uformelle i forhold til jobbsøknad og sånne ting, sant, på det skriftlige. Men ikke på det muntlige.
Int.	Hvilket læreverk bruker din arbeidsgiver?
Peter	Jeg har jobbet med Stunt, Passage, Target... ja, og Tracks.. alle de kjenner jeg til...
Int.	Så hvis du skulle lagd et opplegg om dette for din klasse så hadde du ikke fått så mye hjelp fra disse bøkene?
Peter	Nei, det tror jeg ikke. Jeg tenker.... At for sånne ting trenger man 'live' ressurser. Man må ha film eller sånne opplegg på det.
Int.	Men føler du at de hjelpemidlene du trenger for å lage opplegg eller skape mer fokus på dette i dine timer, at du har tilgang på det?
Peter	Det er vanskelig å svare på. Jeg må jo innrømme at dette er ikke noe jeg bevisst har prioritert i mine timer. Men jeg har ikke sett det, eller kommet over gode undervisningsopplegg man kan bruke her.
Peter	Det er litt mitt inntrykk også. Hvis man setter seg ned og ser på de målene som blir beskrevet i formålet med faget, så er det veldig sterkt fokus på denne kompetansen. Men når jeg har sett i lærebøker og andre bøker, så er det veldig lite fokus på det i forhold til hvor stort det blir blåst opp da.
Peter	Ja, det er jo det. Du har jo den inndelingen du har. Først har du litt om England, så litt om USA, så om Australia... Så har du noen ... ja, så har du det gamle engelske språket, opprinnelsen for det, og du kan sammenligne gammelt og nytt, men ikke noe om formelt og uformelt i forhold til muntlig omgangstone og sånne ting, det er det ikke.

Int.	Helt til slutt i artiklene reflekterer jeg litt over hva det er som påvirker elevens utvikling av det jeg refererer til som pragmatisk kompetanse. Jeg nevner blant annet læreren som viktig, læreboka, andre læremiddel som film og opptak av autentisk tale, lærerutdanningen - alt dette kan spille inn. Har du noen tanker om hva som kan være det viktigste?
Peter	Hmm..
Int.	Jeg tenker jo at vi må skape en interesse for det, så hva er det som kan få eleven til å oppdage at 'oi, dette er faktisk viktig, dette må jeg kunne'?
Peter	Ja, ... Jeg tenker da i utgangspunktet her, hvis du skal ha en generell sak, så vil det jo være læreboknivå, undervisningsopplegg og sånne ting da... for hvis du tenker, som du sier, så har vi jo kompetansemålene og sånne ting, og de står jo der. Da er jo de på plass allerede. Og da tenker jeg at det er undervisningsopplegg og planer og sånne ting, for det er jo i realiteten så styrer jo det veldig mye måten man legger opp ting på, ikke sant. Så du må ha tilgjengelig gode undervisningsopplegg og sånne ting. Hvis ikke så krever du jo på en måte at lærerne skal gjøre det selv. Og det vil jo være veldig varierende hva man får til der da. Og så vil det jo selvfølgelig være et behov i lærerutdanningen også at det blir satt fokus på denne kompetansen. Hvis man får det inn som studenter, så vil man jo ha det med seg derfra. Men jeg tror først og fremst at det som styrer er det som kan finnes av tilgjengelige undervisningsopplegg og sånne ting da – tror jeg!
Int.	Du nevnte lærerutdanningen her. Når du tok PPU... husker du om det var noe spesielt fokus på det når du var student der?
Peter	Altså, når jeg tok engelsk da da var det fokus på 'de fire store', altså read, write, listen og talk. Det var det fokus på. Det var ikke fokus på denne kompetansen i det hele tatt. Det var ikke fokus på opplegg for hvordan man skulle få fram forskjellen på dette med formelt og uformelt – ikke i det hele tatt.
Int.	Du nevnte i sted at for å lære seg denne kompetansen, så måtte man helst reise og oppleve det selv. Har du noen tanker om hvordan man kan skape denne følelsen i klasserommet? Uten å sende elever på utveksling? Vi har jo ikke mulighet til dette.
Peter	Det som er et alternativ er jo at man må kunne ha film som viser ulike situasjoner, og så kan man på bakgrunn av de vise ulike situasjoner, for eksempel, eller jobbe på andre måter med det. Men jeg tenker at først, så må jo elevene få se det og bli bevisst på det, og så kan de bruke det i etterkant, enten det er med film eller med ordlister og sånt... Det å kunne se og så spille det selv i etterkant tror jeg ville vært lærerikt. Men altså, det å bruke film og sånne ting tror jeg ville vært mer egnet enn om du hadde det skriftlig i en bok. Det handler jo om kroppsspråk og situasjonene og sånne ting, ikke sant.
Int.	Man må altså lære det ved å gjøre det, ikke bare ved å pugge en teoretisk liste med retningslinjer?
Peter	Ja, først må du se, og så kan du gjøre det.
Int.	For... du sa at du ikke hadde fokusert så mye på det i egen undervisning, men har du testet ut noe av det du snakker om her?
Peter	Nei, det har jeg ikke.
	avslutning